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GALA Christmas ISSUE

Interview
ROBERT DOWNEY JR.
It Doesn't Get Any Wilder Than This

MISS CANADA SCORES A KNOCKOUT!
The Punch That Cost Her the Crown

ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE GURU ANDREW WEIL ON MEN AND HEALTH

KING OF THE HILL GOES TO THE MANSION

PLUS: COLLEGE BASKETBALL PREVIEW

SEX STARS OF 1997

KURT VONNEGUT'S LAST NOVEL

20Q WITH CHRIS ROCK

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE BRA AND WAY MORE

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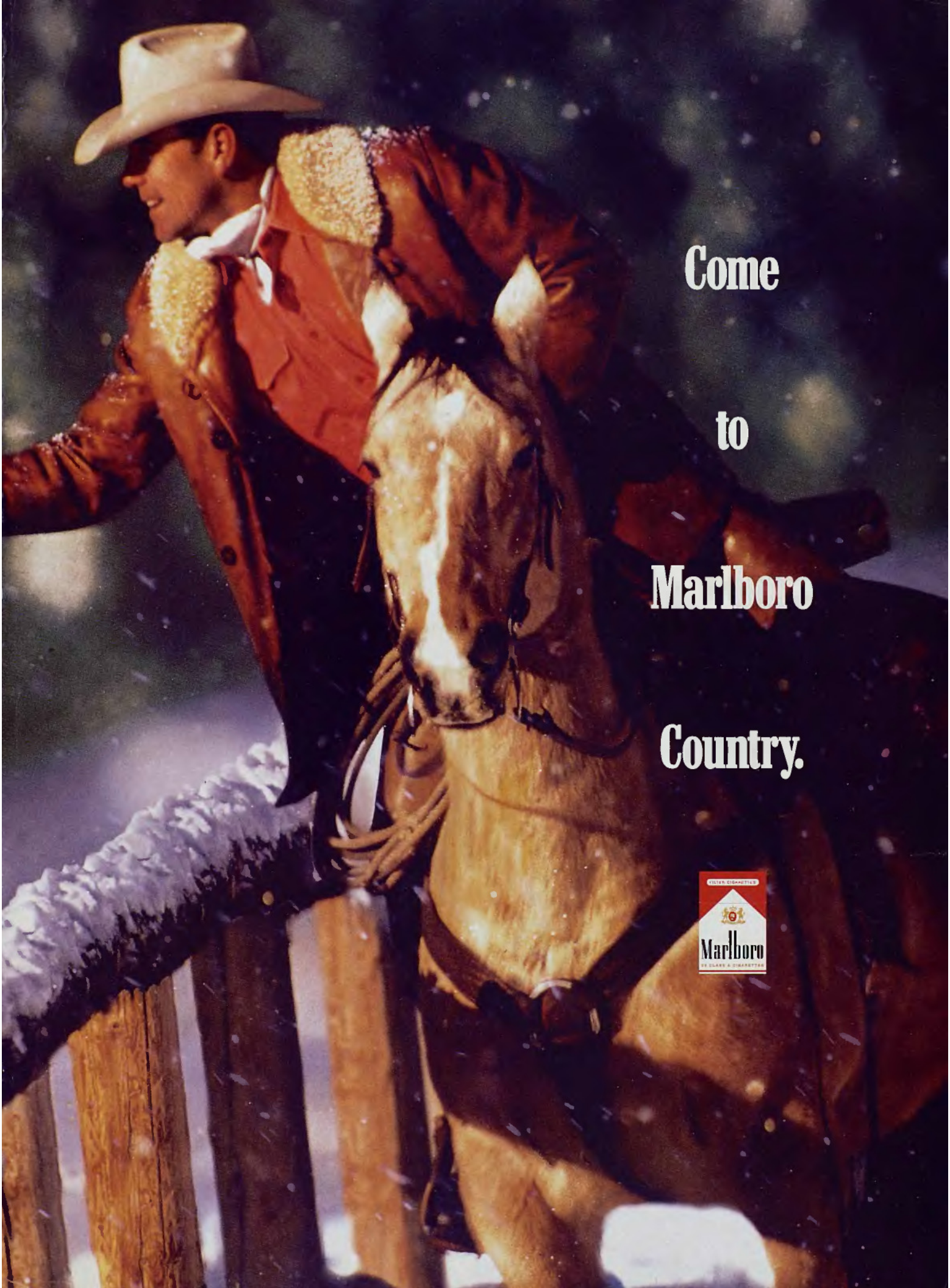
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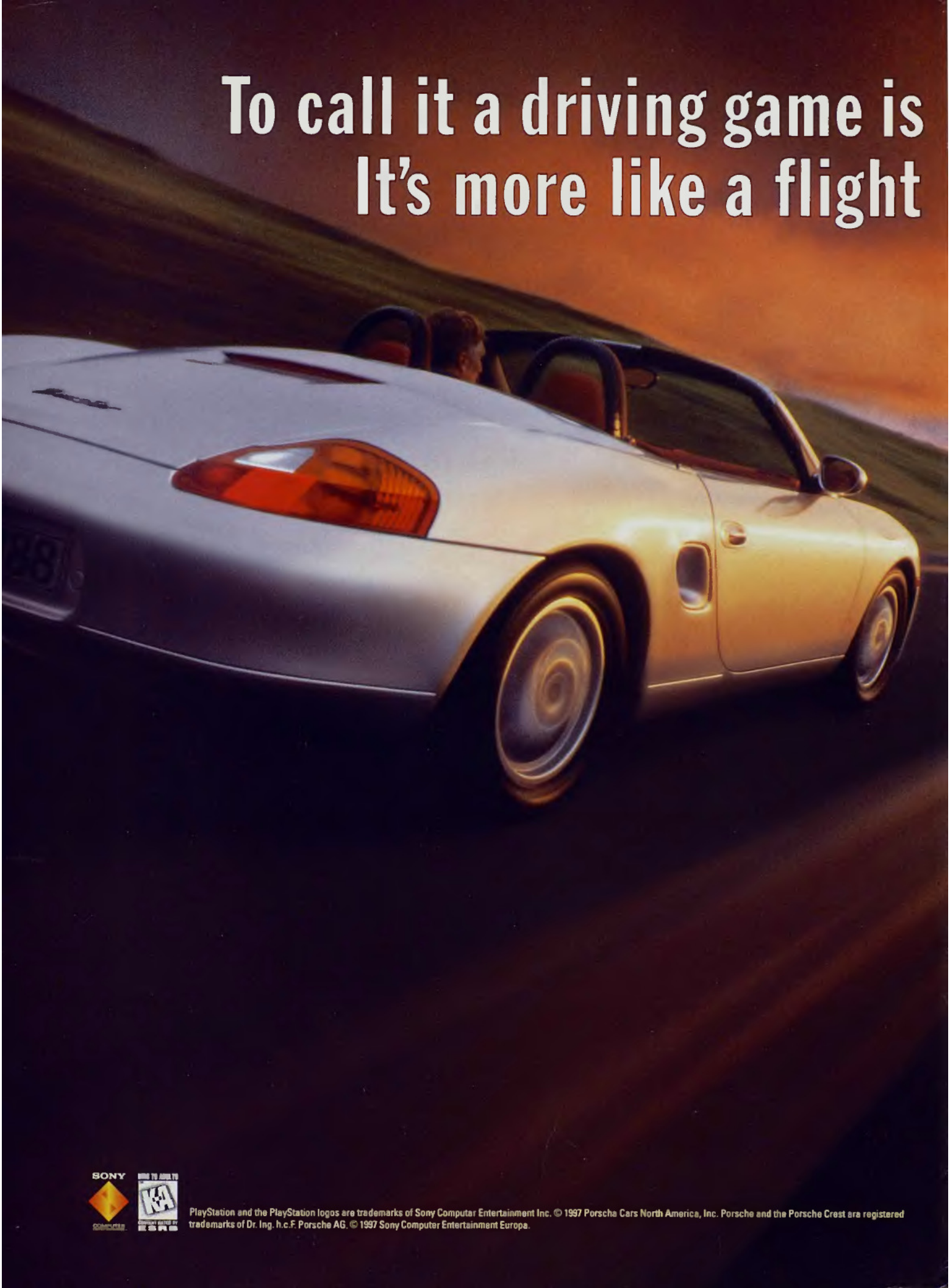

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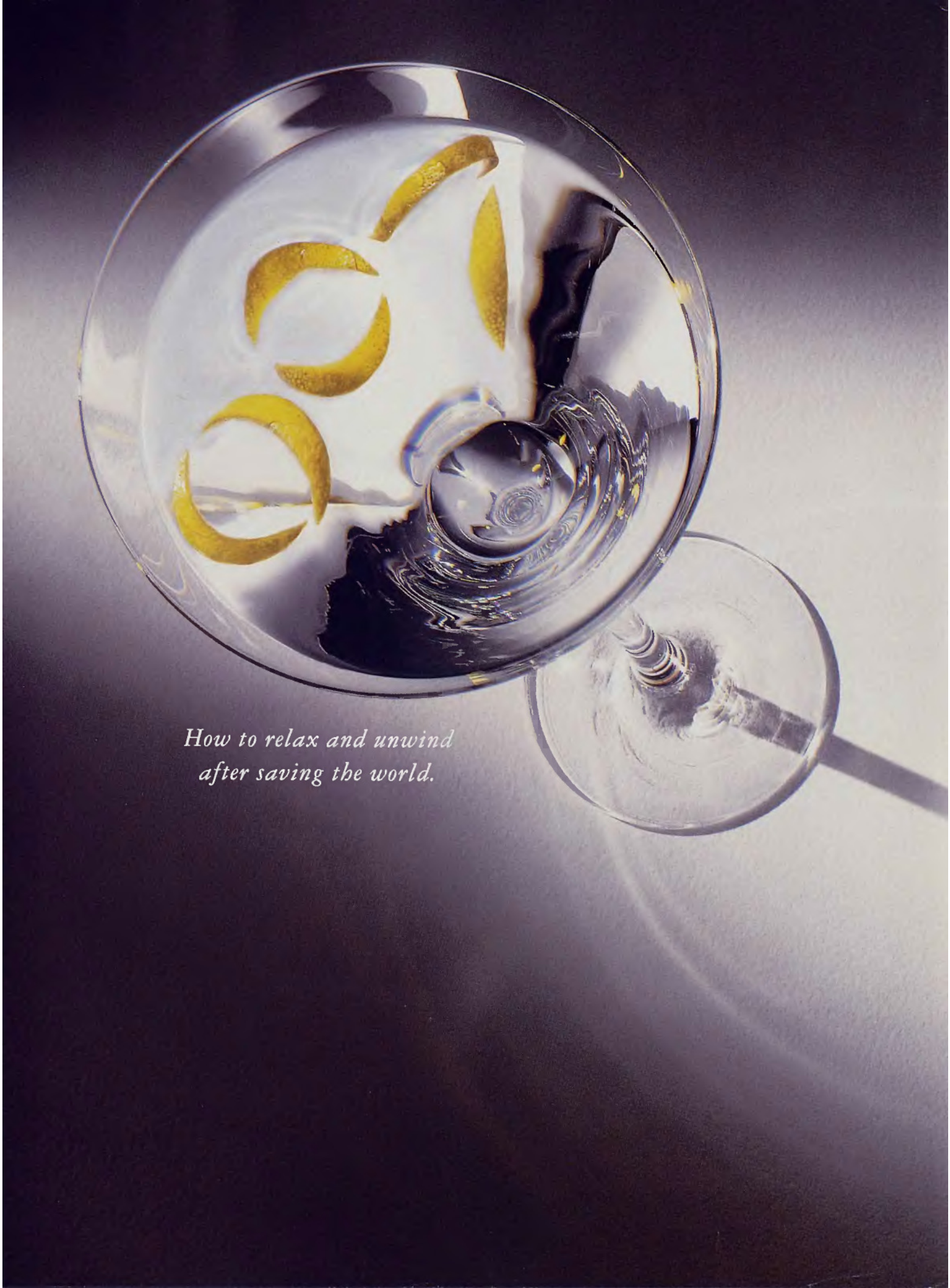
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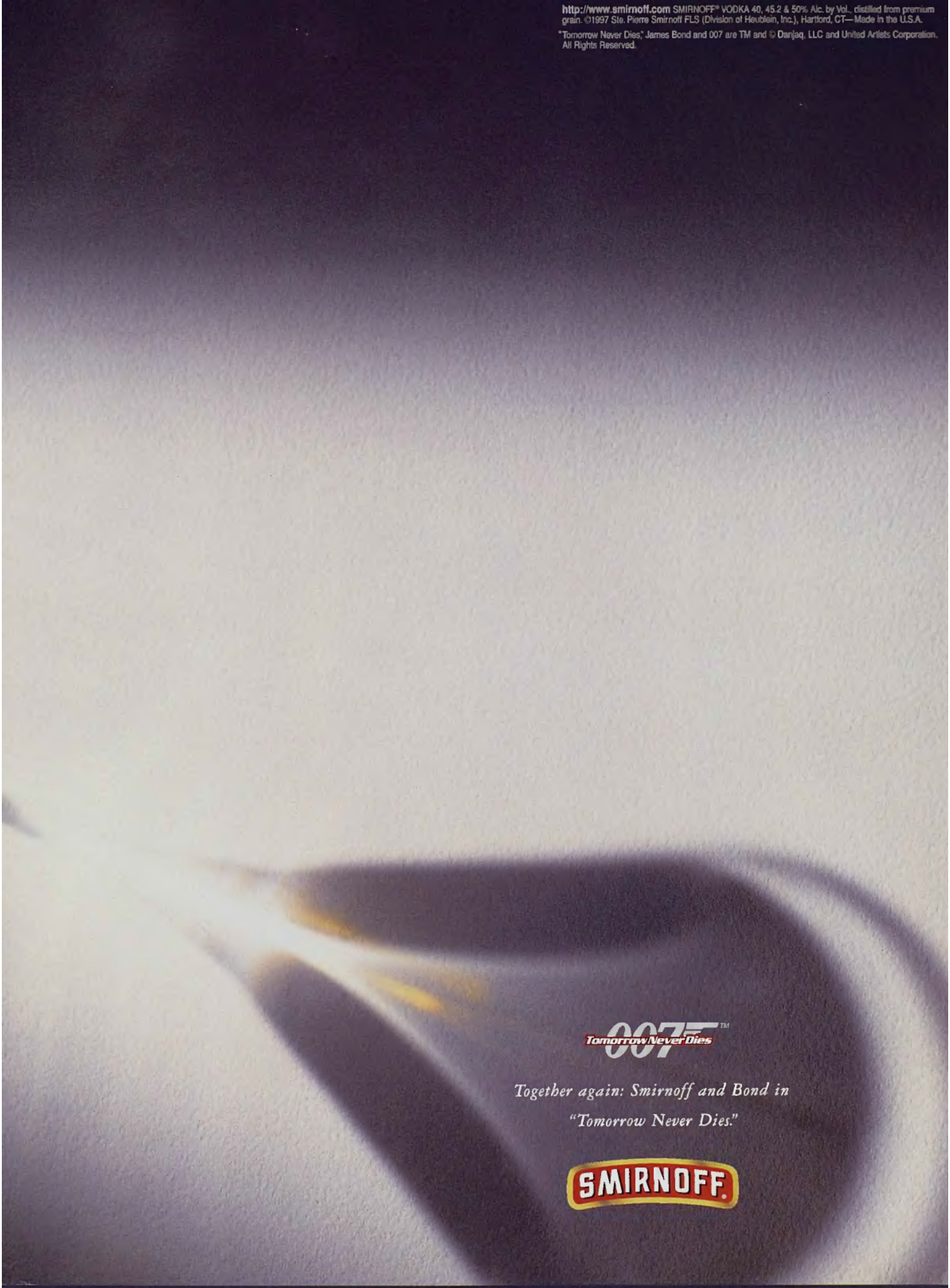

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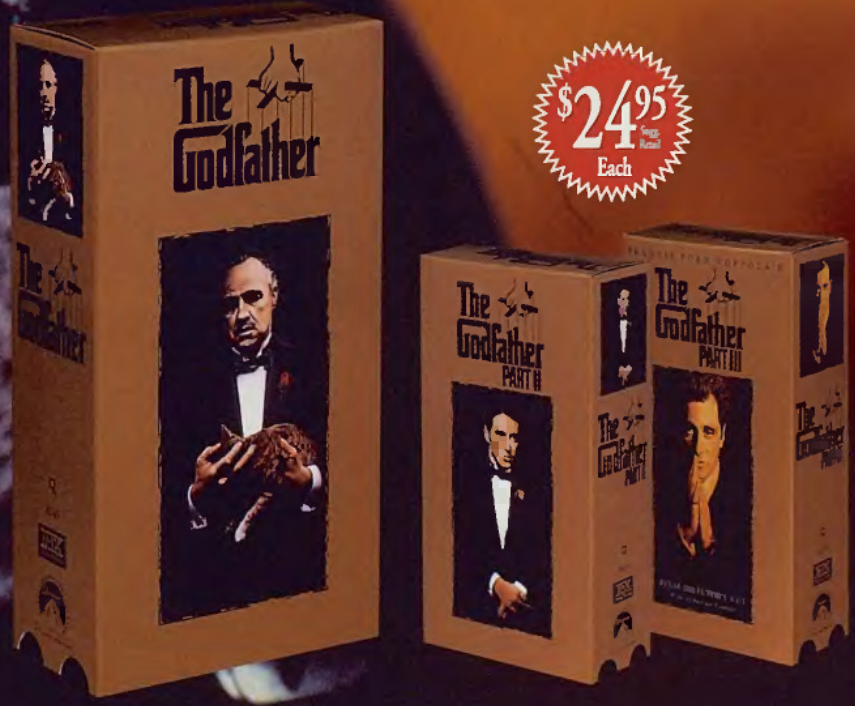

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TRADITIONALLY, December is PLAYBOY's time to reap, to assess and to just plain let it rip. If you're not in a holiday mood now, you will be by the time you finish reading this issue.

We start off with the ghost of parties past. Despite his Academy Award nomination for *Chaplin* and his impressive talent, **Robert Downey Jr.** is probably best known for the physical comedy of his drug-addled antics. It's a rep he'll never shake and he meets it head-on in this month's *Playboy Interview* with **Michael Fleming,** a columnist for *Daily Variety*. "Downey is not particularly ashamed of or apologetic about his problems," Fleming says. That's an understatement. In a wild, unbridled discussion about his junkie period and his stint in jail, Downey relives his escapes from rehab and tries to remember the details of the "Goldilocks" incident (he was found passed out in the home of a startled Malibu family). Then it's on to how he's rebuilding his life and career with roles in the forthcoming films *One Night Stand* and *The Gingerbread Man*. Whatever you think of Downey, don't call him dull.

At the other end of the speculum, well-rounded physician **Andrew Weil's** synthesis of scientific research and alternative therapies is advancing the field of preventive medicine. His Web site receives 2 million hits a month and his PBS specials seem to run more frequently than the stations' pleas for money. Still, Weil is concerned that men—the half of Americans most at risk from stress—may not be listening. In *Dr. Weil's Rx for Guys* by **David Sheff,** Weil swells our faith in herbs that will stimulate our sex drive. And though he knocks steak, he also explains why washboard abs work only on the covers of silly magazines.

We will never know why **Andrew Cunanan** gunned down fashion designer **Gianni Versace** in Miami. The networks overwhelmed us with a shining moment of TV camera lights, then moved on to the next big story. Initial reports pegged the murderer as an AIDS-riddled serial killer. As it turned out, he was neither sick nor serial material. Writer **Pat Jordan,** a resident of Florida, has seen how the Sunshine State exerts a pull on both the fabulous and the failures. His article *Versace's Paradise* (the artwork is by **Wilson McLean**) is a tale of two cities—seedy North Miami Beach and sex-charged South Beach. Jordan re-creates the comfortable life Versace led in the area around his mansion, then tracks Cunanan's miserable last moments as, his looks and money fading, he sprang for an $11 haircut.

Though the great white north is known for its chilly weather, tempers there can run a bit hot. Within two months of winning the title Miss Canada International, beauty queen **Danielle House** broke her crown when she struck her ex-boyfriend's girlfriend in a bar, which led to a conviction for assault. This month the Newfoundlander sheds all but her tiara in, you guessed it, a knockout pictorial by Contributing Photographer **Stephen Wayda.**

She's not the only woman out there with a good left jab. Golden Glover Jill Matthews says boxing is the "punk rock of sports: It's aggressive and offensive." The number of female fighters is growing, and these sisters are spunkier than ever. According to **Amy Handelsman,** a former movie and television development exec from Los Angeles, training and sparring beat the stuffing out of aerobics and Stair Masters. In her article *Women Boxing*, she reveals how she learned to swing and brings us close enough to clinch her female idols as they square off in Madison Square Garden. Guys may want to check out *Are You Ready to Box, Men?* and *How Hard Do They Hit?* before they climb into the ring with a woman. If women's pugilistic skills ever get as sharp as their tongues, we're in big trouble. **Kadir Nelson's** illustration adds pop to the piece.

We keep things shaking and baking with *Playboy's College Basketball Preview* by our up-front big man, Sports Editor **Gary Cole.** This year's season will delight the speed freaks among

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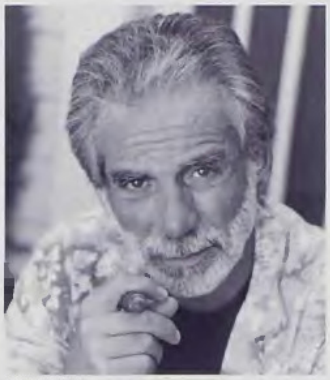
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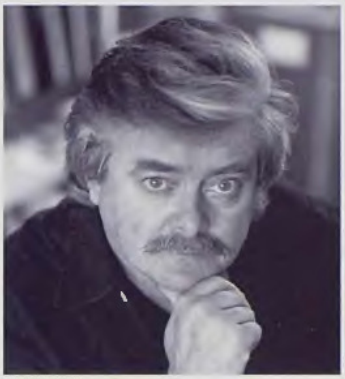
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you: There are afterburner guards and racehorse forwards galore. Cole scouts the toasters and boasters of the top 50 teams and pegs UCLA as the net winner.

Kurt Vonnegut headlines our fiction this month much as he has stood at the forefront of American letters for the past four decades. *Timequake*, an excerpt from the book *Timequake* (G.P. Putnam's Sons), is a first look at what Vonnegut calls his last novel. It features the delightfully wry musings of his alter ego Kilgore Trout and is illustrated by **Istvan Banyai.** We pass the yule torch from an established star to a rising one: **Thom Jones** shines a light above a madcap madhouse in his short story *A Midnight Clear* (the artwork is by **Charles Bragg**). It could be the most soulful and hilarious depiction of the human condition since Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

Before humor writer **Robert S. Wieder** goes caroling, he likes to roast a sacred cow or two. This holiday season he takes Chelsea Clinton to school (and drops her off in the waiting arms of Stanford men) and caters to Martha Stewart's every whim (sharpening his knives on her kitchen steels). It's all in his lyrically deft and daft songbook, *Celebrity Christmas Carols*. Then we get ready to rock in the new year. Comedian **Chris Rock** is worth every Lil' Penny ad he gets his voice on. With a new HBO series and the book *Rock This!* (plus two Emmys for his *Bring the Pain* special), he's making sure everybody gets stoned on his one-liners. We sent music critic **Nelson George** to Brooklyn for a *20 Questions* with today's hottest stand-up comic. Rock burns current black sitcoms and talks about walking in Eddie Murphy's shadow. He also debunks the alleged seductive power of humor. In reference to the woman in Bill Gates' life he says, "She doesn't mind that Bill's not a quick wit."

On the mountain of laughs, there's no disputing that **Mike Judge** and **Greg Daniels** are at the peak of their careers. They had the hottest animated TV show to debut last year. Their star, Hank Hill, like many celebrities before him, makes a pilgrimage to Holmby Hills in *King of the Hill Visits the Mansion*. Too bad he's just there to fix a propane grill. The piece was written by **Steve Barker,** and **Steve Boswick** drew the panels. It's a gas. ("Um, Beavis, the lawyers want us to say, 'The series *King of the Hill* is created by Mike Judge and Greg Daniels and airs Sundays at 8:30 P.M. Eastern time.'" "Uh, you've already said it, Butt-head.")

Matthew McConaughey as you've rarely seen him. The see-through splendor of **Milla Jovovich.** The rising assets of our own **Victoria Silvstedt.** We lift the veil on today's hottest celebs in our annual homage to Hollywood's agents provocateurs, *Sex Stars 1997*. Newlywed Associate Photography Editor **Patty Beaudet-Francès** gathered the pictures, Senior Art Director **Chet Suski** designed the layout and Contributing Editor **Gretchen Edgren** makes sense of it all in the accompanying text. Don't miss the fireworks. Turn to page 164, students. *The History of the Bra*, our other theme pictorial, is a class act gone crazy. Who made the first bra? Who brought us the Wonderbra? What did they use before nylon? Who cares? English photographer **Byron Newman** threw caution and panties to the wind but got the pictures just right.

As your shopping list makes you crazy, remember: We're all in this together. *The Twelve Gizmos of Christmas* (adorned with holiday gremlins drawn by **Donato Giancola**) is a feature about handheld fax-modems, cordless radar detectors and other gadgets that will drive you mad with anticipation. Then check out our *Christmas Gift Guide* if you have money left for the one you love most—yourself. Our fashion spread *Yule Togs* will keep you sleek and chic. Casual, fitted suits and such sensuous fabrics as velvet, gabardine and stretch wool will help you make a seamless transition from office party to dance club. However, you'll have a much better chance of meeting Playmate **Karen McDougal,** an avid outdoorswoman, by heading to the slopes. "When men see these pictures," she says, "I want them to want me." Trust us—that's the easiest thing a woman will ask of you all season.

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COVER STORY

Only two months after becoming Miss Canada International in August 1996, Danielle House was charged with punching an ex-beau's girlfriend and stripped of her title. Tagged the "brawling beauty," she wants it known she's really "a girly girl." Our cover was produced by West Coast Photo Editor Marilyn Grabowski, styled by Jennifer Tutor and shot by Stephen Wayda. Alexis Vogel styled Danielle's hair and makeup. Our Rabbit is a jewel in the crown.

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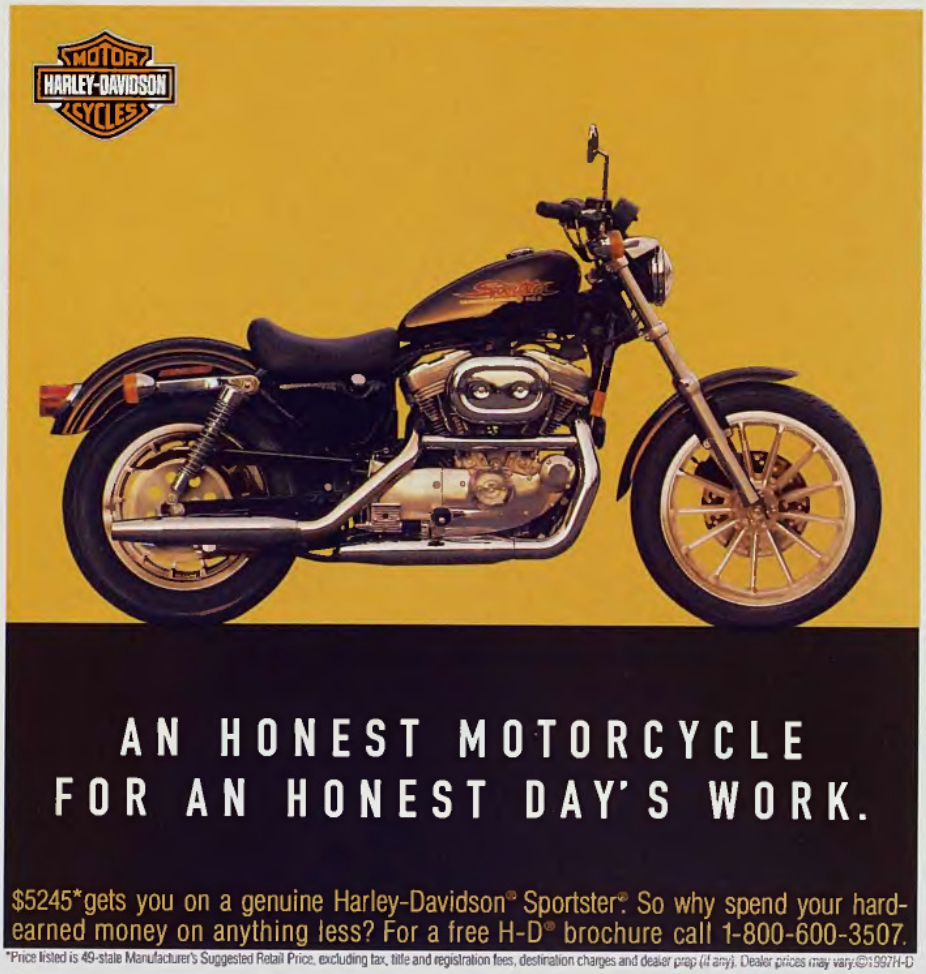
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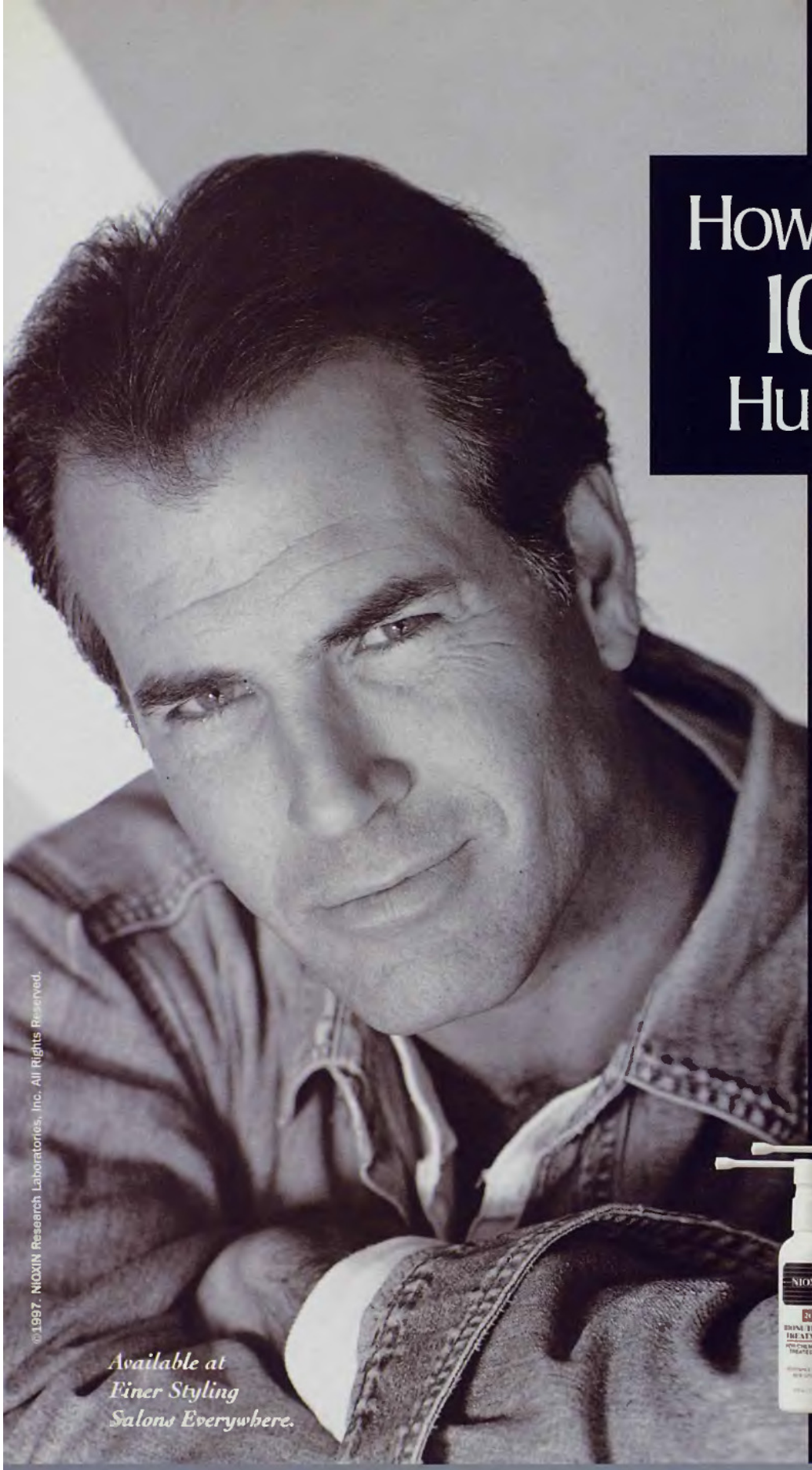

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DREAM GIRLS

I enjoyed the September double cover and the accompanying pictorial (*Blonde Ambition*). But, with all due respect to Pamela Anderson Lee and Jenny McCarthy, I'd still straight-arm both of them to get to a dangerous redhead.

Bill Doritty Jr.
North Huntingdon, Pennsylvania

Two classic beauties in one issue. How lucky can a guy get?

Dave McDaniel
Virginia Beach, Virginia

Thanks for giving my libido two more reasons to stay alive.

Duane Brooks
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Half the blondes you mention in the *Blonde Ambition* pictorial, including Pamela Anderson and Madonna, are actually brunettes. Brunettes rule.

Linda Marrese
Phoenix, Arizona

Enough is enough; I'm bored. You have featured Pamela and Jenny enough to cover the four corners of the earth. Please give it a rest.

Charles Ehninger
Fort Worth, Texas

CHRISTOPHER WALKEN

Christopher Walken tells Lawrence Grobel in the September *Playboy Interview* that getting a hard-on is something a woman will never understand. Walken will never understand the joy of experiencing several orgasms in rapid succession while getting oral sex from a great lover.

Charlene Hartley
Concord, California

How refreshing to see a celebrity speak frankly about not wanting to have children. I'm impressed by Walken's honesty in stating that he doesn't enjoy the company of children and has chosen not to have any kids. If more people spent as much time making such a serious decision, the world would be a better place.

Peggy Currid
Champaign, Illinois

Walken has been a favorite of mine since his superb performance in *The Deer Hunter*, in which he proved that sensitive and macho can work well together. Far from being weird or spooky, Walken is a gifted actor.

Anthony Oddi
Watertown, New York

FOOTBALL FORECAST

I've read Danny Sheridan's football preview for many years and find him well informed and insightful. However, I disagree with his prediction of a third-place finish for the Broncos in the AFC West (*Playboy's Pro Football Preview*, September). They're a much better team than that. Last year, Sheridan had them finishing dead last, and they won 13 games and lost three. What does he have against the Broncos?

Mike Foley
Edison, New Jersey

What has Sheridan been smoking? I can't believe he picked the Oilers to win the AFC Central. I realize the road to the Super Bowl doesn't go through Pittsburgh anymore, but you can be sure the division title still does.

Scott Swank
Greensburg, Pennsylvania

CYBERSEX

I am delighted that Chip Rowe lists the Navel Base site in his *Surfing for Sex* article (September). I've always thought women's belly buttons are sexy, and the popularity of this site proves that I'm not alone.

Samuel Franklin
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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I'm disappointed with Rowe's choice of sex sites. Where are Danni's Hard Drive and Persian Kitty? How can he omit Asia Carrera's Homemade Homepage at http:www.asiacarrera.com? Carrera has dozens of great pictures, she updates every week and she can often be found on her chatline for hours at a time. While I've long been a fan of Nina Hartley and I respect her First Amendment work, her page, which Rowe includes in his list of 25, has little content, almost no nude pictures and isn't updated often. If PLAYBOY features another online sex piece, I suggest you first conduct a reader's poll to accurately reflect the popular sites.

Chris Bridges
Orange City, Florida

PLAYMATE NEWS

Ever since the February 1996 issue, when you added *Playmate News* to the magazine, I've enjoyed reading about all the recent Playmate activities. I especially enjoyed your gossip item about the Playmate softball team (September). Talk about a league of their own.

Dale Pickett Jr.
Perry Hall, Maryland

HARE APPARENT

That rascally Rabbit appears where you least expect him. On your September issue's two wonderful and sexy covers, I found the Rabbit in Jenny's eye almost immediately, but he was sneakier with Pamela. He disguised himself as a freckle and planted himself on the bridge of her nose. Am I jealous that the Rabbit is closer to two sexy Playmates than I'll ever be? You betcha.

Patrick Stewart
Carmichael, California

A gleam in the eye of Jenny
May look to you like a Bunny,
But shining a light
On the nose to her right
Shows Pamela's Bunny's some honey.

Michael Davies
Rockville, Maryland

CARTOON ANGST

I'm a 25-year-old college-educated black businessman. I enjoy PLAYBOY for its good taste and class. But a cartoon in your September issue of a black athlete wearing an open shirt, turned-back hat and gaudy gold jewelry has me wondering whether there's been a lapse in judgment. This stereotype may have been acceptable in the Sixties, but it's politically incorrect in the Nineties.

Nicholas Belt
Glendale, Arizona

EXECUTIVE DECISION

Would you believe PLAYBOY is responsible for the nation's first networking and marketing organization for women, the National Association of Female Executives? I founded the organization in 1972 after looking at ads in PLAYBOY aimed at sophisticated male executives. I asked myself why there wasn't an organization dedicated to the needs of women in the workplace. My answer was NAFE. This year we celebrated its 25th anniversary, and I'd like to thank Hugh Hefner and PLAYBOY for the inspiration.

Wendy Rue
New York, New York

SPORTS BABES

Thanks for the pictorial featuring golfer Lisa Ann Hörst (*Sports Babes*, September). I'd like to let Lisa know that there are many fine golf courses in

North Carolina, and she'd be a welcome visitor at all of them.

Chris Davis
Clayton, North Carolina

I'm packing away my soccer cleats and taking up golf.

Derek Novaes
Sacramento, California

Golf pro Lisa Ann Hörst is my favorite sports babe. But something tells me a lot of men would have a problem with a PLAYBOY model who has a handicap lower than theirs.

Lincoln Apeland
Dallas, Texas

THE GAL'S GAY

I am disappointed in Asa Baber's *Men* column about Ellen DeGeneres ("Goofy and Ellen," September). Disney and ABC didn't pull the wool over anyone's eyes. I don't think DeGeneres' sexual preference came as a big surprise to many people. So get over it, guys. Being gay isn't a terminal illness. It's a fact of life, and kudos to Ellen for having the courage to tell the world the truth.

Michelle Owens
Spanish Lake, Missouri

MISS DESTINY

I'm thrilled that Nikki Schieler, featured on your August cover, has become Miss September. This goddess is going to set the world on fire.

David Faught
Walnut Grove, Missouri

I've seen Nikki in other publications modeling swimsuits and in the Frederick's of Hollywood catalog modeling lingerie. Thank you for giving us another look at this captivating woman.

Michael Dorr
Minneapolis, Minnesota

DIVING DILEMMA

Having been a scuba diver for many years, my advice to the guy in the September *What Sort of Man Reads Playboy* ad is to abort the dive and take the beautiful blonde below, because I know he won't enjoy his dive if he doesn't use booties with those fins.

John Matthews
High Point, North Carolina

PLAYMATE REVISITED

What a pleasure it is to see my favorite Playmate, Karen Velez, again (September). I have her framed centerfold hanging in my garage. Whenever my 80-year-old neighbor visits, he asks me to lift the garage door so he can get a charge.

David Minear
Hollis Hills, New York

ADIEU, ROBERT L.

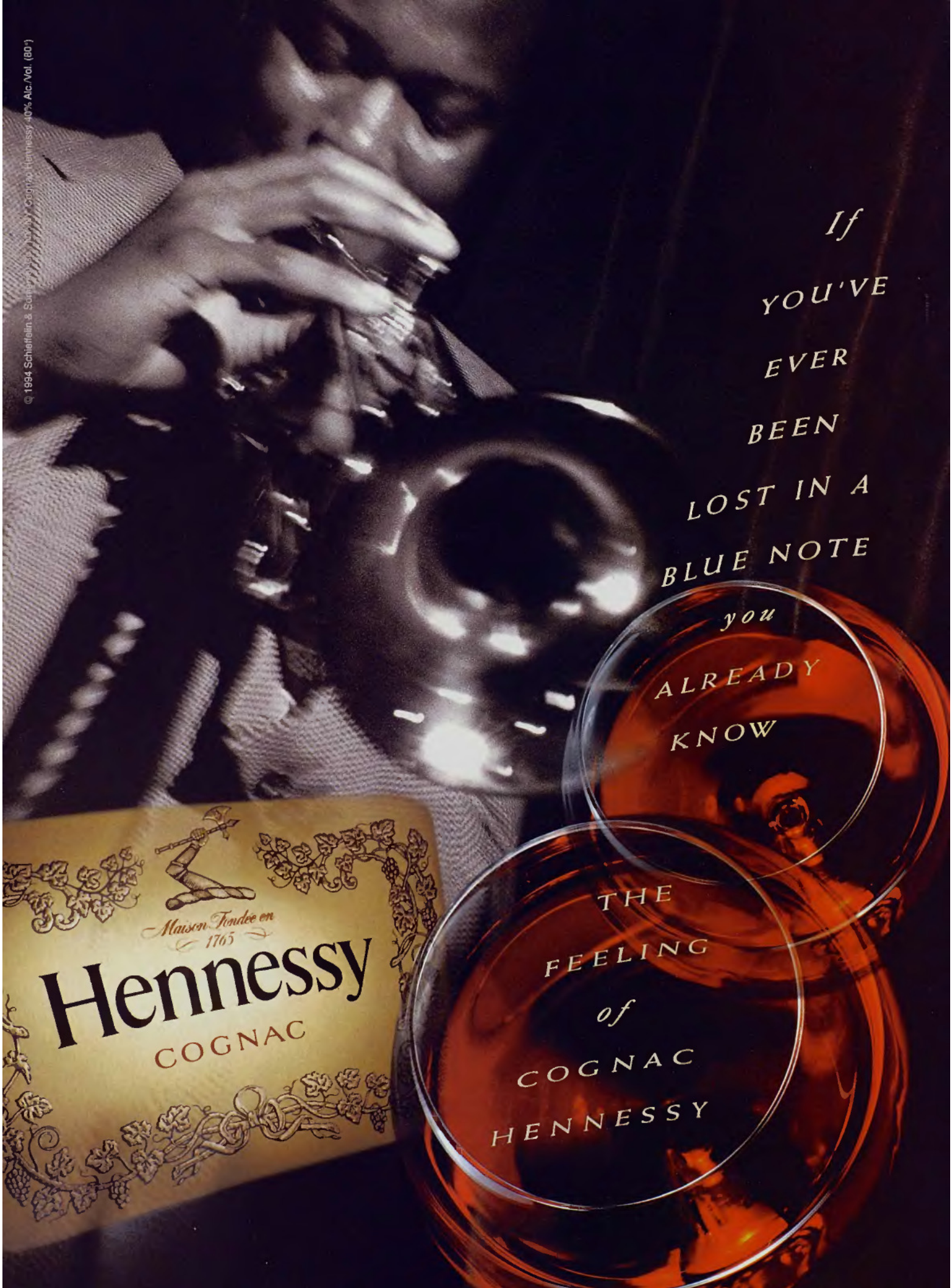
I read with sadness of the death of PLAYBOY's former Fashion Director, Robert L. Green. He believed that being well dressed was something all men could do. He stressed simplicity, good taste and quality, but he was not a snob.

James Cashman
Lake Forest, Illinois

PUPPY LOVE

While looking at my 15-week-old sharpei, I noticed a familiar shape in his forehead wrinkles. Lo and behold, it's the PLAYBOY Rabbit Head.

Peter Spitalnik
Yorktown Heights, New York



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PLAYBOY AFTER HOURS

MOUNTAIN PIQUE

Bill Swift, a ranger at Grand Teton National Park, told *The New York Times*: "Good judgment is not in our collective memory anymore." Each summer tens of millions of people visit our national forests and parks. Some of them are ill-equipped, some get on their cell phones and demand helicopter rescues and some complain. A list of outlandish comments attributed to U.S. Forest Service comment cards has found its way to the Internet. There are ideas for trail improvement: "Escalators would help on steep uphill sections." "Chairlifts need to be in some places so we can get to wonderful views without having to hike to them." "The places where trails do not exist are not well marked." There are tips for tidying up the wilderness: "Too many rocks in the mountains." "Need more signs to keep areas pristine." "The coyotes made too much noise last night and kept me awake. Please eradicate these annoying animals." The most sour comment? "A small deer came into my camp and stole my bag of pickles. Is there a way I can get reimbursed? Please call."

SPANISH FLY

A nine-year-old Barcelona boy was diagnosed with "redundant prepuce," according to the *National Organization of Circumcision Information Resource Centers*. In lay terms this means the youngster's foreskin was long enough when it was stretched that he would tuck it into the waistband of his underwear. Although the pulling and tugging had no adverse effect on the boy's penis (or his vision), a doctor circumcised him to help him snap out of the habit.

FOOTLOOSE AND FANCY-FREE

We were delighted to have attended the Miss Fancy Pants show at Chicago's Point of View Gallery. Miss Fancy Pants is a bright, cute, wildly talented young woman named Erika DeVries, whose photographs—think of them as performance art caught on film—show her doing handstands in both mundane and exotic locations. Miss Fancy Pants wears a skirt while performing these handstands, and, invariably, the focus of these pictures is on her extravagant underwear. We saw her upended with Manhattan in the background, in a cemetery next to an angel-topped headstone and even in a photo booth (for the art-talking-about-art subtext). The artist, who believes that an irreverent woman is a strong woman and that her behavior is completely uncalled for, explains herself with charming clarity: "Miss Fancy Pants is the funny feeling you got in your skirt and shorts before you knew what to do with it. Miss Fancy Pants shows you hers whether or not you show her yours." Which, we believe, is one of the things that has made our country great. Miss Fancy Pants is going on tour to upend herself in new places and to spread her message, so catch her if you can.

POP QUIZ

The Spice Girls have inspired so much envy and derision there is now a chain e-mail called "The Top 15 Questions on the Spice Girl Job Application." Among the queries: "True or false: A mosh pit is the seed of the mosh fruit." "How many times have you been kicked out of a karaoke bar?" "Choose an appropriate nickname: Sexy, Nasty, Sweetie, Chlamydia." "Have you ever been convicted of combining vertical and horizontal stripes?" And our favorite, "If two trains leave Liverpool an hour apart at 90 kilometers and 75 kilometers an hour, respectively, how would you look in spandex?"

ILLUSTRATION BY GARY KELLEY

MR. FREEZE

Favorite expression of the month: batmobiling. It means to put up one's emotional shield in the manner of the batmobile's retractable armor, as in, "She wanted to introduce him to her mother and he started batmobiling."

HOUND DOG

Mini–Elvis impersonator Gregory Raposo, 12, couldn't believe his luck. There he was on the couch of *Fox After Breakfast*, sandwiched thigh-to-thigh between *Baywatch* beach bunny Donna D'Errico and MTV's delectable Daisy Fuentes. First he listened to D'Errico tell how it felt to pose nude for PLAYBOY. Then he sat through Daisy's discussing how she felt wearing next to nothing for her swimsuit calendar photo shoot. Finally, host Vicki Lawrence got around to him and asked what he'd like to be when he grows up. The youngster didn't hesitate. "A photographer," he said, beaming.

EGG BEATERS

The Tamagotchi craze, which is teaching children around the world the virtues of love, responsibility and wasting time, has taken a typically juvenile turn. The handheld virtual pet—whose name means "cute little egg"—must be maintained vigilantly or the toy's LCD screen will go out and it will "die." Though the creature lacks wings to pull off, the *Financial Times* reports that Japanese boys have become enthusiastic about killing the toy as quickly as possible. They either beat it to death with the "discipline button" or gorge it on snacks from the "food button."

RAW DATA

SIGNIFICA, INSIGNIFICA, STATS AND FACTS

QUOTE

"Stick with me, kid, and you'll be farting through silk."—ROBERT MITCHUM TO HIS FUTURE WIFE DOROTHY SPENCE

MICROSCOPIC

As of earlier this year, combined stock market value of Microsoft and Intel: $274 billion. Combined market value of GM, Ford, Boeing, Eastman Kodak, Sears, J.P. Morgan, Caterpillar and Kellogg: $235 billion.

RATINGS RATING

Percentage of TV viewing audience controlled by major networks (ABC, NBC, CBS) ten years ago: 75. Percentage today: 49.

STEVE TUNA

FACT OF THE MONTH

Clear electric Christmas tree lights were invented in 1882; outdoor color lights were introduced in 1914 in Denver, which later billed itself as the "Christmas City of the World."

PROZAC BABIES

Number of new prescriptions or doctor recommendations for Prozac to Americans aged 13 to 18 in 1995: 148,000. Number of new prescriptions of Prozac for 13- to 18-year-olds in 1996: 217,000. Number of new Prozac prescriptions for 6- to 12-year-olds in 1995: 51,000. In 1996: 203,000. Number of new prescriptions or recommendations for Zoloft for 13- to 18-year-olds in 1995: 155,000. In 1996: 199,000. Number of new Zoloft prescriptions for children aged 6 to 12 in 1995: 33,000. In 1996: 46,000.

EXECUTIVE PRIVILEGE

According to a three-year survey of prime-time TV, percentage of murders in which businessmen were the perpetrators: 30. Percentage of murders committed by doctors, cops or politicians: 13.

NO-WIN SITUATION

Number of years since the betting favorite has won the Kentucky Derby: 18. In 123 Derbies, number of winning favorites: 48.

WAR RATIONS

Amount of the U.S. defense budget in 1987: $370 billion. Amount in 1997: $260 billion.

HORSE CENTS

Amount an ecstatically weeping woman paid at auction for a pair of horseshoes worn by Mr. Ed: $8625.

LET Y EQUAL XMAS

Assuming Rudolph is in front, number of possible ways to arrange Santa's other eight reindeer: 40,320.

ROCK AROUND THE GLOCK

According to a survey at Wake Forest University, percentage of violent videos on MTV: 22. Percentage of violent videos on other networks (VH1, Black Entertainment TV and Country Music TV): 12. Of videos showing violence, percentage in which women carried weapons: 41.

TEAM TAGS

Of the 113 teams in the four major U.S. professional sports leagues, number of teams whose names do not end in S: 7 (Miami Heat, Utah Jazz, Orlando Magic, Boston Red Sox, Chicago White Sox, Colorado Avalanche, Tampa Bay Lightning).

BAD AIR DAYS

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, number of injuries caused by plug-in air fresheners: 1823.

WHITE ELEPHANT

Original cost estimate of the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center in Washington, D.C.: $362 million. Current budget: $738 million. —PAUL ENGLEMAN

STRONG TO THE FINNISH

Here are the rules in Finland: First, the woman is always on top. The smaller she is, the better, but technique is as important as size. "She can't just sit there. She has to adjust her weight constantly," Jouni Jussila, the man the Finns consider the master of the art, told *The Guardian*. The man and woman need not be married, but the woman must be at least 17. Also, she has to wear a helmet. After all, there are hurdles, water jumps and hairpin turns involved. It's all part of Finland's hot new competitive sport, wife carrying. Jussila and his wife are the champions. In America there's a full-contact sport with no rules called ex-wife carrying—but the heavy lifting involves the guy's wallet.

SHOW US YOUR PLUMBING

The strippers at Lady Godiva's in Hurricane, West Virginia turned down an offer of free job training by the Lighthouse Baptist Church. According to the Associated Press, the dancers had a choice of courses in computer, plumbing, secretarial, electrical or construction trades if they agreed to abandon their current careers. The women were even unmoved by a special appeal at one Sunday meeting by actor Richard Kiel, who played Jaws in two James Bond films. We assume he was brought in because of his considerable experience in the area of regrettable public performances.

HI! COLONIC

In their new book, *The Unimaginable Life: Lessons Learned on the Path of Love*, Kenny Loggins and his wife disclose that they met when she gave him a colon hydrotherapy treatment. However, as Kenny recalls, "It was her eyes that most penetrated me."

HEY—IT'S CHARLIE SHEEN!

As the curtain comes down on 1997, so ends Kraft Foods' 100th anniversary celebration of the advent of Jell-O. We leave you with this shaky fact from Kraft: A lump of Jell-O hooked up to an electroencephalograph had a readout almost exactly matching human brain waves.

HER LADY'S SECRET SERVICE

At 75, Miss Moneypenny is still capable of a swift comeback. Lady Ridsdale, the one-time assistant to James Bond creator Ian Fleming and the inspiration for security chief M's secretary, told a British court how she foiled a mugging recently. As she was getting out of a car, a thief ripped off her watch and attempted to pull off her wedding ring. "That was just too much for me. As I had on a good pair of solid high heels, I kicked out," she testified. "I kicked him in the groin and he doubled up in pain."

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MUSIC

BLUES

BIG JOE WILLIAMS (the Delta blues guitarist, not the Count Basie vocalist) played a uniquely dilapidated nine-string acoustic guitar with a pickup taped to its sound hole. It was rarely in tune, but Williams could always hammer out the appropriate accompaniment for whatever emotion he happened to be exploring. On ***Piney Woods Blues*** (Delmark), a reissue from 1960, Williams sings with a robust baritone. Born in 1903, he was old enough to record some charming personal memories of the legends who invented the blues and young enough to have all his infectious enthusiasm. Up there with Mississippi John Hurt and Bukka White in the pantheon of folk-blues rediscoveries, Williams had a raw though melodic approach that could fire you up or calm you down. In either mode, his sour, bent, utterly liberating style of fingerpicking put out more energy than most rock-and-roll bands generate. —CHARLES M. YOUNG

ROCK

Fans of Elvis and rockabilly will scoop up Scotty Moore and D.J. Fontana's ***All the King's Men*** (Sweetfish). Moore was Elvis' first guitarist, the man who arguably invented rock-and-roll guitar as he fired off a spontaneous blend of up-tempo country and blues licks in the Sun Studios sessions. Drummer Fontana soon joined Moore and bassist Bill Black. Moore and Fontana are accompanied on the album by Keith Richards and the Band, the Mavericks, Jeff Beck, Steve Earle and Joe Louis Walker, among others. It is a pure lovefest, as Keith and the boys pay tribute to the man who inspired them to pick up a guitar.

A Police reunion of sorts takes place on ***Strontium 90–Police Academy*** (Pangaea). Actually it's a 1976 recording of the trio that became the Police: Sting, Andy Summers and Stewart Copeland. This scrappy Weather Report–meets–Sex Pistols thrashfest features a number of Police songs in rough form, including a gorgeous "unplugged" samba version of *Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic*. But the real news is that guitarist Andy Summers' latest, ***The Last Dance of Mister X*** (RCA), is his most intense and eclectic work since playing with the Police. Summers weds jazz sophistication and rock energy to shine again in a trio format. *Big Thing* could be Jeff Beck playing with Cream. Other tunes suggest Pat Metheny or John Scofield jamming with the Police. Summers' chiming textures and elegant solos show him in top form.

Clapton and Cream fans may be surprised that the four-CD boxed set ***Those Were the Days*** (Polydor/Chronicles) has relatively little new material. But polished and rearranged here, Cream's catalog appears in a fresh context. All the studio tracks (including a number of unreleased bluesy demos) are bunched on the first pair of discs. The remaining two CDs contain brilliantly remastered live material that now flows as one huge concert. —VIC GARBARINI

FRED HARPER

Williams' *Woods*.

Classic rock and roll, blues and bluegrass, Puff Daddy and Missy Elliott rap loud.

Having scored big on modern rock charts with *Fizzy, Fuzzy, Big & Buzzy* and having composed the theme to Mike Judge's *King of the Hill*, the Refreshments have a lot of expectations to live up to on ***The Bottle & Fresh Horses*** (Mercury). I say they do it—my expectation being highly melodic rock with chiming major chords, sweet harmonies and an instinct for hooks that makes just about every phrase memorable without being cheap. Folk rock is the reigning style, so these guys appear poised to be a big deal, and they deserve it.

—CHARLES M. YOUNG

No group, not even the Velvet Underground, influenced punk and its aftermath more than Iggy and the Stooges. Given Iggy's true singularity, ***We Will Fall: The Iggy Pop Tribute*** (Royalty) ought to be about as scintillating as last night's ashtray. Amazingly, however, a few of these tracks—Joan Jett's great *Real Wild Child*, the Misfits on *I Got a Right*, *Shake Appeal* by 7 Year Bitch—replicate Iggy's blend of amateurism and sonic control. Still, only one artist has the nerve to go all the way here: Lenny Kaye turns in a version of *We Will Fall* that's even more static and ponderous, doomy and draggy than the original.

Meanwhile, Wayne Kramer, guitar champion of the MC5, comes up with another winner in ***Dodge Main*** (Alive). It's a collaborative effort with singer Scott Morgan and guitarist Deniz Tek. But *Dodge Main* is also the closest Kramer could come to a new MC5 album. It's political, slashing and peppered with good songs (including a couple by Kramer's MC5 comrades, and one from Iggy). *Dodge Main* rocks crazier than anything on *We Will Fall*, or, for that matter, just about anything else you're likely to hear these days. —DAVE MARSH

RAP

Missy "Misdemeanor" Elliott comes out of Virginia as one of the hottest rappers. She has a choppy syncopated style full of humor, low-intensity boasting and a laugh that has become her trademark. She also has a fine singing voice and a firm understanding of harmony. And she's a clever songwriter, too. Combine these skills with the production talents of her partner, Timbaland, and you have ***Supa Dupa Fly*** (East West), her bright, exciting 17-track debut. By adapting the nervous drum patterns of jungle music to hip-hop, Timbaland gives funky backings to a brilliant cover of Ann Peebles' soul classic *I Can't Stand the Rain*, the funny *Izzy Izzy Ahh* and *Best Friends* (featuring Aaliyah). *Supa Dupa Fly* is a contender for best rap album of the year.

—NELSON GEORGE

For sheer heart, no album in the past year can match Puff Daddy and the Family's ***No Way Out*** (Bad Boy). Since it's produced by the crew that brought us the Notorious B.I.G., it's probably the one big hit of 1997 that reasonable people skipped. But, in fact, it's a rewarding listen even if your tastes don't run to gangstas. Puffy and company set their comments on contemporary urban family life to some of the lushest tracks around. Think of it as an album Marvin Gaye could have made. —DAVE MARSH

POP

Lighthouse Family is a hip British duo that specializes in stylish, danceable pop with an inspirational feel. Most of the music on its debut, ***Ocean Drive*** (A&M), is driven by keyboards, with additional electric guitar. Though there are vocals, the tracks could work as self-consciously

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cool instrumentals. Just released this year in America after building a U.K. audience, Ocean Drive is worth a listen for *Lifted*, *The Way You Are* and the enticing title track. —NELSON GEORGE

COUNTRY

In 1948 Ralph and Carter Stanley heard Bill Monroe's *Stewball* rewrite, *Molly and Tenbrooks*, on the radio. They put out their record of it before Monroe could release his, and that was the beginning of bluegrass as a movement. The Stanley Brothers' ***Earliest Recordings*** (Rich-R-Tone) has all 14 songs they recorded in the late Forties and early Fifties for that label. These beautiful songs are suffused with death, suffering, drunkenness, violence and love both blessed and bitter (all of which come together in a great version of *Little Maggie*). The tracks are driven by Carter Stanley's implacable guitar and the brothers' rich vocal harmony. This music isn't nearly so complex as what Monroe did—or, for that matter, the music the Stanleys later made with their string band. But in its simplicity, it may reach deeper into the ancient spirit that bluegrass expresses.

—DAVE MARSH

Pedal steel, manageable beats and white guys drawling literate lyrics: These are things the music business understands. If a band like Son Volt gets hip for a minute, why not sign some vaguely similar group? Like Whiskeytown, say? Thanks mostly to Ryan Adams' reliable tunes and soft vocals, Whiskeytown's ***Strangers Almanac*** (Outpost) is the most commercially credible of the crop. Straight-ahead songs such as *16 Days* or soulful weepers such as *Excuse Me While I Break My Own Heart Tonight* could liven up the pop mélange.

Because I prefer my music savory, I'll root stubbornly for the Bottle Rockets. Guitar-driven longhairs who trace their musical lineage to the Ramones and Lynyrd Skynyrd, the band members demonstrate their country affinities with descriptive lyrics that respect everyday life (such as those of the used-car memoir *Indianapolis* or the bruised-relationship tale *Smokin' 100s Alone*). Chief writer and singer Brian Henneman commands notable bite on the Rockets' third and most radio-friendly album, ***24 Hours a Day*** (Atlantic).

On ***Takin' the Country Back*** (Mercury), John Anderson outdoes himself. Leading off with *Somebody Slap Me*, a paean to the perfect woman ("beauty school diploma," "does her own plumbing"), Anderson successfully skirts Nashville sentimentality for an entire album. This doesn't mean he fails to deliver his trademark warmth. It just means he doesn't neglect his trademark humor.

—ROBERT CHRISTGAU

FAST TRACKS

ROCKMETER

	Christgau	Garbarini	George	Marsh	Young
Big Joe Williams *Piney Woods Blues*	7	10	8	8	8
Bottle Rockets *24 Hours o Day*	8	7	7	7	7
Missy Elliott *Supa Dupa Fly*	7	5	9	5	7
Scotty Moore and D.J. Fontana *All the King's Men*	8	9	8	5	8
Stonley Brothers *Earliest Recordings*	8	9	6	10	8

TUPAC 101 DEPARTMENT: You can study **Tupac Shakur** at the University of California in a history department course that examines his raps and poetry.

REELING AND ROCKING: **Sting** has signed to do the music for an animated Disney film based on *The Prince and the Pauper*. . . . **Robbie Robertson's** new CD is another soundtrack for a PBS special on American Indians. . . . **Stone Temple Pilots' Scott Weiland** is working on a song for the movie *Great Expectations*. . . . **Kirk Franklin** will serve as music director, co-producer and star of a Universal-TV sitcom. . . . **Abra Moore** has a song to sing in the new **Richard Linklater** film, *The Newton Boys*, starring **Matthew McConaughey** and **Ethan Hawke**, among others. . . . **George Clinton** is planning a CD of new music, another of doo-wop and a **P-Funk** movie. . . . It looks as if the deal is done for a movie about **John** and **Yoko** based on her memories of their life together. There are a number of musician movie bios in the works: **Otis Redding**, **Miles Davis** and record producer **Phil Spector** are the subjects. . . . We don't know what to say: a film bio of **Hanson** will be written and directed by Director's Guild honoree **Morgan J. Freeman**. . . . A documentary about **Elvis** impersonators, *All the King's Men*, is in the works. There are at least 400 registered in the U.S. alone.

NEWSBREAKS: Three new books well worth your attention: *Start Your Own Band* (Hyperion) by **Marty Jourard** offers both advice and information. *The Truth of the Matter: Straight Talk for the Aspiring Artist on Getting Into the Music Business* (Brim, Inc.; to order, call 888-302-9927) rates the record companies. And *Jamming the Media: A Citizen's Guide to Reclaiming the Tools of Communication* (Chronicle) by **Gareth Branwyn** is a primer for putting the media in your hands. . . . Nashville is claiming a new Guinness world record for a guitar marathon. Last summer 1555 guitarists played *Twist and Shout* in unison for 75 minutes. . . . **Madonna's** Maverick records will distribute **Quentin Tarantino's** A Band Apart record label. First up is the soundtrack for his next film, *Jackie Brown*. . . . All hail Rhino Records for the absolutely best boxed set of the year: *Beg, Scream & Shout: The Big Ol' Box of Sixties Soul*. Prove it, you say? How about *Agent Double-O-Soul*, *Baby, I'm Yours* and *Sunny*? We rest our case. Other Rhino news: There's been a dustup over a compilation CD, *Women Like Us: Lesbian Favorites*, that contains songs embraced by the lesbian community but not necessarily sung by lesbians. Some licensers have refused to approve tracks because of the title. . . . **Paul McCartney** produced a special audio program based on *Flaming Pie* for the presidential plane after a request from the prez. . . . **Sarah McLachlan** plans to have male performers at the next **Lilith Fair**. . . . **Luscious Jackson** lead singer **Jill Cunniff** is the voice of digital actress Laura Lewis in the Sega game Enemy Zero. . . . The ultimate **Grateful Dead** collectible went on the auction block this past October: the house at 710 Ashbury in San Francisco where the band lived between 1965 and 1968. The bidding began at $900,000 and the owners have pledged two percent of the sale price to four charities. **Jerry** would approve. . . . Here's a boomer moment: This past summer there was a Web auction (minimum bid: $800,000) for the crypt where **Elvis** was buried until his father, **Vernon**, got Memphis politicos to approve a family graveyard at Graceland. Alas, poor Elvis.

—BARBARA NELLIS

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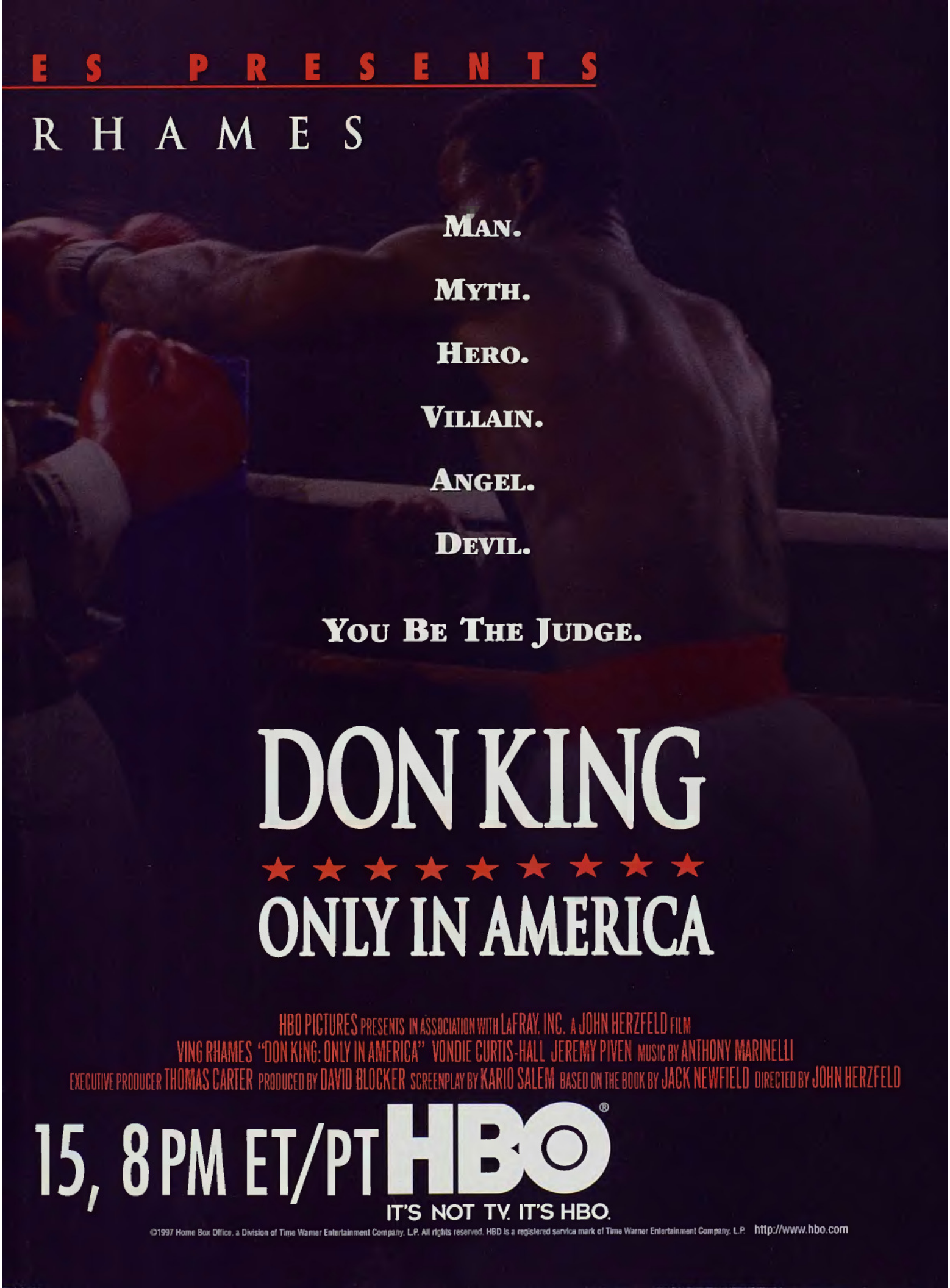
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MOVIES

By BRUCE WILLIAMSON

ON THE ROAD with a pair of amoral con artists (Frances O'Connor and Matt Day as Nikki and Al) ***Kiss or Kill*** (October Films) is a tour de force. Nikki lures men she meets from barroom to bedroom, and Al steps in to rob her victims after they're drugged. Things go wildly awry in Australian director Bill Bennett's nonstop spree of violence and retribution when one man dies—presumably a blackmailer. The twosome then take possession of a compromising video that shows a famous ex-footballer (Barry Langrishe as Zipper Doyle) fooling around with a young boy. Detectives pursue the couple for questioning, Zipper wants them dead, and *Kiss or Kill* takes up the chase in sizzling style reminiscent of *Bonnie and Clyde*. The chaotic plot is occasionally hard to follow, so pay close attention—because Bennett makes it one hell of a trip. ¥¥¥½

•

Elemental tragedy infuses every reel of ***Swept From the Sea*** (Sony), an adaptation of the Joseph Conrad story *Amy Foster*. Rachel Weisz is arresting as Amy, a soulful outcast who is considered a simpleton by her parents and neighbors in a bleak village on the coast of Cornwall. Amy's life changes when a shipwrecked Ukrainian sailor named Yanko (Vincent Perez) washes ashore and learns to appreciate her eccentric ways. Yanko is spurned by most of the locals even after he and Amy marry. Weisz and Perez perform star-making stints, convincing us that their love will endure despite indifference, bad luck and cruelty. Joss Ackland, Ian McKellen and Kathy Bates add their quirks to a sad period piece as austerely beautiful as the craggy Cornwall scenery. ¥¥¥

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The flashy, futuristic ***Gattaca*** (Columbia) foresees a time when cloning is standard procedure. This minimalist drama about an aspiring spaceman (Ethan Hawke) is coolly high-tech. Hawke plays Jerome, a nice guy with certain physical imperfections (they scarcely show) because he was conceived in love, the old-fashioned way. Uma Thurman plays his paramour and co-worker at the Gattaca Corporation, where intrigue and murder threaten to derail the next Titan space mission. Will handsome, ill-bred Hawke make the team? He will—if he can swap identities with an incapacitated, genetically flawless athlete and also prove he's not a killer. Seeking clues in subsidiary roles are Alan Arkin and Gore Vidal. But the question persists: In the monotonous realm of Gattaca, is anyone going to care? Not much. ¥¥

Day and O'Connor: On the run.

Grifters grab a video, spacemen try on genes, and an outing gone awry.

•

Spectacular Argentine dancer Pablo Veron stars in ***The Tango Lesson*** (Sony Classics), and watching him is a joy. Unfortunately, his co-star and dance partner is the movie's writer and director, Sally Potter, whose vivid 1992 *Orlando* won an Oscar nomination. Potter plays a filmmaker who promises to let him star in one of her films if he will make her a tango dancer. Whatever possessed Potter to cast herself opposite Veron remains a mystery. Although she's a former dancer, her high-stepping *Tango Lesson* stumbles at some risk between entertainment and outright embarrassment. ¥¥

•

Directed by his father, Robert Downey Sr., in ***Hugo Pool*** (BMG Independents), Robert Downey Jr. (see this month's interview) has a relatively minor role as one of the Hugo pool-cleaning company's weirdest clients. Downey Jr. goes for broke, accent and all, as Franz Mazur, a far-out European movie director who doesn't pay his bills and has recently shot a movie extra for overacting. Clearly, outrageous excess runs in the family. The senior Downey's off-the-wall screenplay (co-authored with his late wife, Laura) stars Alyssa Milano as Hugo Dugay, owner of the Los Angeles pool-cleaning outfit. Her mom (Cathy Moriarty) is a chronic gambler, while her dad (Malcolm McDowell) is a heroin addict whom she sends off to the Colorado River to collect fresh water for one customer's pool. En route, he meets a mysterious hitchhiker (a cameo role for Sean Penn). Meanwhile, Hugo, on the cleaning circuit, loads her truck with a wheelchair-bound new customer (Patrick Dempsey), who speaks through a talking device. Other roguish characters pop up in a cultist comedy about as crazy as anything since Downey's *Greaser's Palace* in 1972 (Downey Jr., then seven, played a mutilated child). ¥¥½

•

There hasn't been a funnier movie this year than ***In & Out*** (Paramount), with Kevin Kline on the mark as an Indiana schoolteacher who's about to be married when an Oscar-winning movie star (Matt Dillon) names him on national television for being an inspiration—and gay. Despite his fondness for Barbra Streisand show tunes, that's news to the teacher and the small town where he lives. From then on, every sidesplitting variation on the theme of "outing" is played by writer Paul Rudnick, director Frank Oz and a superbly comic cast. As the befuddled bride-to-be, Joan Cusack does a prize-worthy turn. Add some madly hilarious bits by Dillon, Tom Selleck, Debbie Reynolds and Bob Newhart. Gay or straight, you'll giggle all the way home. ¥¥¥¥

•

The gay couple scrutinized in ***Happy Together*** (Kino International) is unhappy most of the time. As the mismatched duo, Leslie Cheung and Tony Leung are at odds unless they're making love. These two fellows from Hong Kong break up in the first reel, after which both run away to Buenos Aires, where they meet again and move in together. Their off-and-on relationship—while they hustle, take odd jobs or meet new friends—is the gist of the film. Though skimpy on plot, it is acted, directed and shot (by cinematographer Christopher Doyle) in a moody, neorealistic style that commands attention. Like it or not, you'll see why the movie won a best director award at the 1997 Cannes Film Festival for writer-director Wong Kar-Wai. Fixing his gaze on real people in fey or empty encounters, Wong makes waves. ¥¥½

•

Turn-of-the-century scenes set in London and Venice give ***The Wings of the Dove*** (Miramax) a gossamer finish. Equally eye-pleasing is the cast, headed by Helena Bonham Carter as Kate, the heroine of this intelligent adaptation of a Henry

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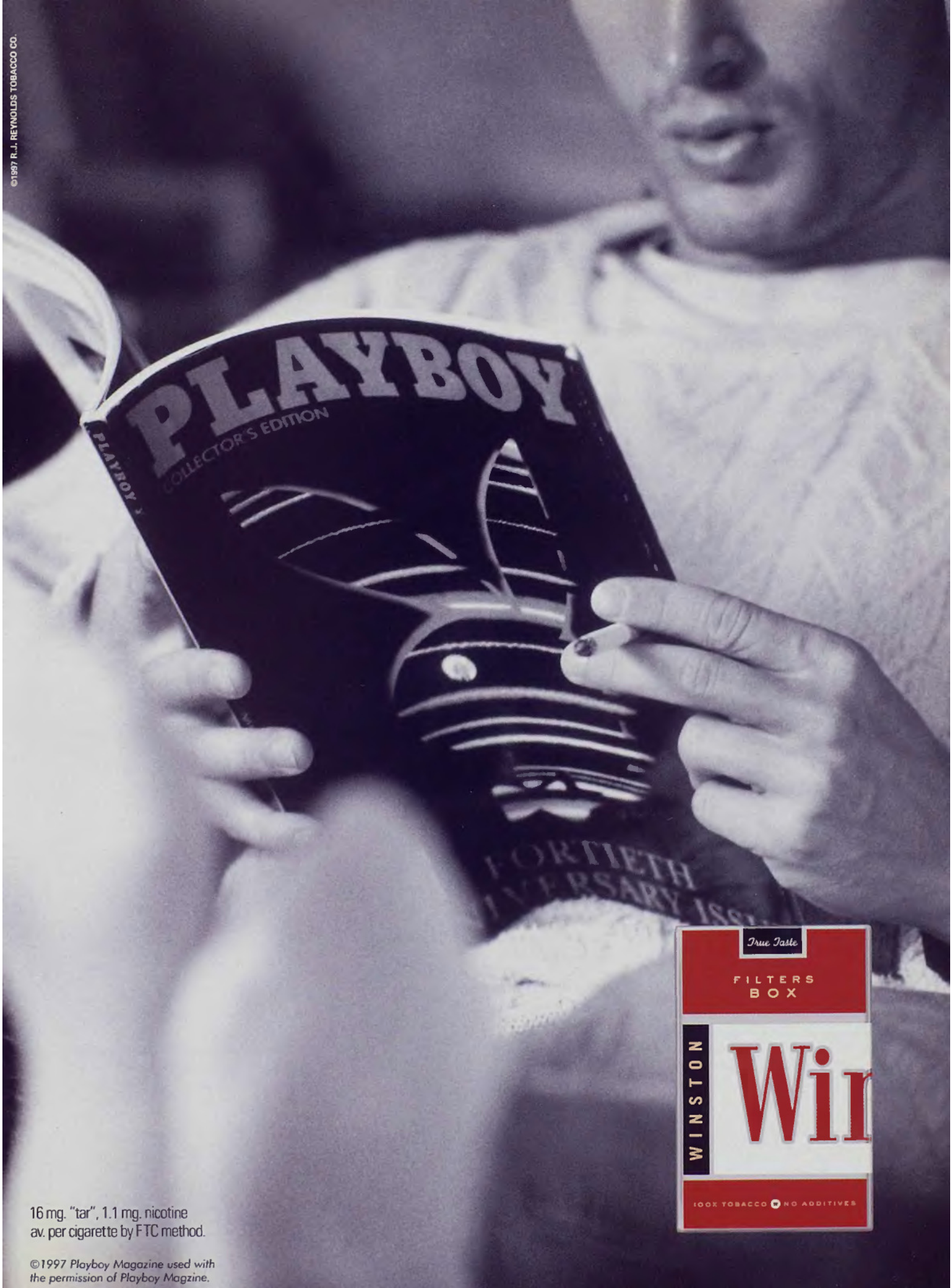

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Colin does Jackie.

OFF CAMERA

Margaret Colin, who says her age is nobody's business, portrays Jackie Kennedy Onassis in a comedy slated for a November opening on Broadway. Colin paused over a drink at Sardi's to talk about how her career is going. Just fine, thank you. She is recognized on the street for the megahit *Independence Day*, in which she played the president's press secretary and Jeff Goldblum's ex. "I held the president's hand and saved a few babies," she recalls. This year, she played Harrison Ford's missus in *The Devil's Own*. "Nothing about that movie was easy," she notes, referring to the many script revisions. "In one scene, when I'm attacked, I was just supposed to stand there and scream while they kick the crap out of my husband. Finally, Harrison agreed to let me throw a few punches. After all, I'm a cop's daughter."

Colin was one of five kids raised in an Irish Catholic family on Long Island. Her dad, retired, was with the New York police before he became a Chemical Bank vice president. Her mother at one time was a crop duster in Oklahoma. Nowadays, Margaret lives in New Jersey with her two young sons and actor husband, Justin Deas, who has won several daytime Emmys. Playing a mother in real life is wonderful, but Margaret—despite *Devil's Own*—eschews mom roles on the screen. "I don't even read for them; they don't write moms very well." Her last stage role was off-Broadway, in *Psychopathia Sexualis* ("I was a chic New York woman, the friend of a sock fetishist"). But she is wildly excited about her debut as Jackie. "It's satire, but Jackie is treated with kid gloves. I'm on a good swing—I did one of the highest-grossing movies of all time, and I have the title role in a Broadway show. I just hope I don't have a heart attack on opening night."

James novel. Director Iain Softley casts Charlotte Rampling as Kate's affluent aunt, Linus Roache as the penniless journalist Kate adores and Alison Elliott as her rich American friend, Milly. James' ironic tale is rich with passion and deceit as Kate plays Cupid between her lover and friend. Poor Milly is dying and smitten with the journalist, and she may be persuaded to leave her money to him. The Jamesian plot doesn't thicken, and *Wings of the Dove* winds up a sad, bittersweet love story. ¥¥¥

•

The poignancy and compassion of ***Welcome to Sarajevo*** (Miramax) are undeniable. This labor of love, shot in the war-torn city by British director Michael Winterbottom, is primarily concerned with a conscientious English foreign correspondent (Stephen Dillane). His reaction to the horrors of war is to rescue one young girl (Emira Nusevic) by smuggling her out of the country. That's the central narrative, inspired by the actual events of *Natasha's Story*, a book by Michael Nicholson. In Frank Cottrell Boyce's adaptation, other true tales are combined with newsreel coverage of Sarajevo under attack by Bosnian Serb big guns and snipers in 1992. Checking in periodically amid the rubble are Woody Harrelson as a star American journalist and Marisa Tomei as a well-intentioned aide concerned with evacuating orphans—plus Kerry Fox, Emily Lloyd and Goran Visnjic as participants in the chaos. The plight of innocent children, many recruited on the spot, gives *Sarajevo* plenty of emotional momentum even when the overlapping tales become tangled. A viewer may wonder who's who at times, but only a cold heart could fail to be moved by it. ¥¥¥½

•

Excess can be expected in a movie directed by Oliver Stone, and ***U-Turn*** (Tristar) doesn't disappoint. In the John Ridley screenplay, Bobby Cooper (Sean Penn) is a drifter on his way to pay off a gambling debt in Vegas when his car breaks down, stranding him in the desolate desert town of Superior, Arizona. He is robbed, cheated by an auto repairman (Billy Bob Thornton) and beaten up by a thug (Joaquin Phoenix) before a local real estate baron (Nick Nolte) offers him getaway money if he'll murder the man's faithless wife (Jennifer Lopez). Instead, Cooper makes love to the woman and agrees to kill her husband. *U-Turn*'s nonstop double-crossing and violence seem absurd at times, but the movie remains engrossing thanks to actors as good as these. The black comedy escalates into a bloodbath reminiscent of *Fargo*, but without the fine-tuned balance of humor and horror. Stone jump-starts his thriller with maximum force but doesn't know where to stop. ¥¥½

MOVIE SCORE CARD

capsule close-ups of current films
by bruce williamson

Boogie Nights (Reviewed 11/97) The down-and-dirty rise and fall of Los Angeles porn peddlers. ¥¥¥

Critical Care (11/97) Blackly comic business in a big-city hospital. ¥¥¥½

The Edge (11/97) Hopkins and Baldwin have it out over Elle in a Mamet script. ¥¥¥

Eve's Bayou (10/97) Doctor makes out with his patients way down South. ¥¥

Eye of God (11/97) An endangered nice girl and the ex-con pen pal she marries. ¥¥½

Gattaca (See review) Deadly genetic intrigue puts a space mission on hold. ¥¥

Habit (11/97) Man finds out his sexy New York date is a vampire. ¥¥½

Happy Together (See review) Gay lovers get away from it all in Argentina. ¥¥½

The House of Yes (11/97) More or less a no, except for Parker Posey as a kinky rich girl with a Jackie O complex. ¥¥

Hugo Pool (See review) Downey flakes abound in this confusing comic free-for-all. ¥¥½

The Ice Storm (11/97) Coming of age in Connecticut around 1973. ¥¥¥¥

In & Out (See review) Oscar winner outs his gay teacher, and the consequences are hilarious. ¥¥¥¥

Kiss or Kill (See review) On the run with a pair of con artists. ¥¥¥½

L.A. Confidential (10/97) Bad cops and big cheeses on the take in darkest Hollywood. ¥¥¥¥

The Matchmaker (Listed only) Erin go blah with Janeane Garofalo. ¥¥

The Myth of Fingerprints (10/97) A family home for the holidays in frosty New England. ¥¥¥

The Peacemaker (11/97) Kidman and Clooney save the world. ¥¥¥

Soul Food (11/97) The ties that bind three sisters go back to mother's cooking. ¥¥¥

Swept From the Sea (See review) Rustic tale about passionate star-crossed lovers. ¥¥¥

The Tango Lesson (See review) Dance, little lady—on second thought, maybe you shouldn't. ¥¥

U-Turn (See review) Oliver Stone on a roll, if not always in control. ¥¥½

Welcome to Sarajevo (See review) High drama set in the battle-scarred Balkan city. ¥¥¥½

The Wings of the Dove (See review) Henry James' gossamer romance, with an edge. ¥¥¥

¥¥¥¥ Don't miss ¥¥ Worth a look
¥¥¥ Good show ¥ Forget it

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GUEST SHOT

Richard Lewis, the jumpy co-star of ABC's *Hiller and Diller*, not only loves the movies, he lives by them as well. For example, he's particularly drawn to the 1971 Renee Taylor–Joseph Bologna comedy *Made for Each Other*, "mainly because it covers my three favorite topics: death, therapy and fear of commitment." When it comes to superlatives, the master neurotic calls *Dr. Strangelove* "the greatest black comedy of all time," *Raging Bull* "the best film of my generation" and *Last Tango in Paris* "a Marlon Brando acting primer." (He also admits: "My bedroom is a shrine to *Last Tango*.") And when, alas, Lewis' obsessiveness gets the best of him, he screens Roman Polanski's *The Tenant*. "It makes even the worst paranoid look like Mr. Greenjeans. I've seen it about 4 million times." —DONNA COE

VIDBITS

The story of Vietnam doesn't belong solely to Oliver Stone. From director Hung Tran Anh (*The Scent of Green Papaya*) comes ***Cyclo*** (New Yorker, $89.95), the tale of a bike-taxi driver who is sucked into the dark gang world of modern-day Vietnam. Granted permission to film on location in Ho Chi Minh City, Hung calls on his trademark blend of rhythmic sounds, poetic narrative and surreal visuals to tell his allegory against the backdrop of the Vietnamese jungle. The story occasionally gets muddy, but the pictures keep getting better. The film won the Golden Lion Award at the 1995 Venice Film Festival.

DOOMED SIDEKICKS

Ever notice that whenever the star is told, "Meet your new partner," it's only a matter of time before the underling is killed off? There's just something about number two that's conveniently disposable. For instance:

Magnum Force (1973): Felton Perry—heard from him lately?—falls for the old bomb-in-the-mailbox trick. He's just one of Clint Eastwood's many partners to buy the farm.

No Mercy (1986): Kim Basinger, indentured sex slave to a vice lord, lures detective Richard Gere's partner to a death by disembowelment.

Black Rain (1989): Andy Garcia loses his head to a motor bike–straddling samurai as partner Michael Douglas watches in horror from behind a fence. Even more amazing in slo-mo.

Top Gun (1986): Watch out for that canopy! Anthony "Goose" Edwards is cooked when cocky pilot Maverick (Tom Cruise) forces an ejection.

Lonesome Dove (1989): The deathbed request of Gus McCrae (Robert Duvall) to fellow former Texas Ranger Woodrow Call (Tommy Lee Jones) has the cowboy hauling old Gus' carcass to Texas. Thanks for the lift, pal.

Midnight Cowboy (1969): Every cowboy needs a sidekick, so when Texas hustler Joe Buck (Jon Voight) migrates to Manhattan, he winds up bosom buddies with consumptive con man Ratso Rizzo (Dustin Hoffman).

Any episode of ***Star Trek:*** You never want to be the extra person beamed down in the landing party. And don't wear the red shirt. —BUZZ MCCLAIN

LASER FARE

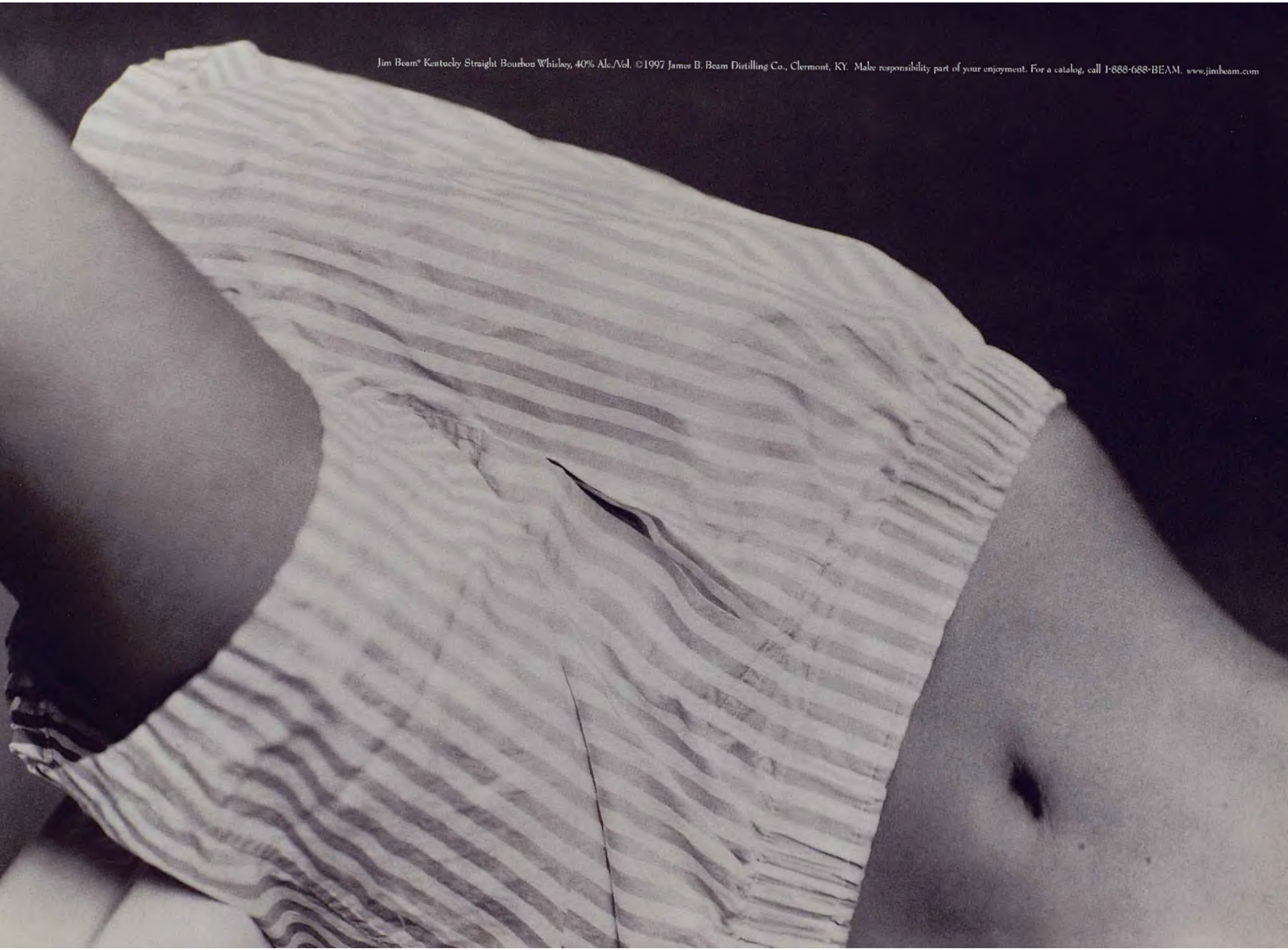
Laser fans eager to indulge in a study of cinematic contrasts need look no further than two of Voyager's recent Criterion Collection releases: John Waters' 1972 ***Pink Flamingos*** ($49.95) and Leni Riefenstahl's 1939 ***Olympia*** (two disks, $99.95). The laser package for *Flamingos*—a revolting fantasia about two families competing to be the "filthiest people alive"—includes commentary by gross-out king Waters, making-of material and trailers. And though *Olympia*, a two-part documentary on the 1936 Berlin Olympics, has no significant extras, it remains a peerless study on the beauty of the human form (though Riefenstahl's political subtext remains controversial). . . . Lumivision has combined the versatility of DVD with its love for classic cinema. ***Nothing Sacred,*** the 1937 screwball comedy starring Carole Lombard and Fredric March, boasts a crisp transfer from the original 35mm film elements, as well as rare two-color Technicolor Mack Sennett shorts (***Campus Vamp*** and ***Matchmaking Mama***) and Gable and Lombard home movies. —GREGORY P. FAGAN

BLAST FROM THE PAST

Before there were X-files and Mars missions, America was obsessed with the bomb and how it could change—or end—life on earth. The award-winning ***Trinity and Beyond: The Atomic Bomb Movie*** ($24.95; Goldhil) tells the story of nuclear weaponry, from the 1945 trial bangs in the New Mexican desert to President Kennedy's 1963 Test Ban Treaty. Also included: previously classified government footage, an interview with Dr. Edward Teller ("father of the H-bomb"), an original score by the Moscow Symphony Orchestra—and a very strange finale. William Shatner narrates. (To order, call 800-250-8760.)

VIDEO MOOD METER

MOOD	MOVIE
BLOCKBUSTER	***The Lost World*** (*Jurassic Park* revisit; by-the-numbers Spielberg, marked by fine Goldblum and owesome dino effects), ***The Fifth Element*** (futuristic supercabbie Bruce Willis saves the universe; a wild ride, though often campy-vampy).
COMEDY	***Trial and Error*** (goofball actor pretends he's a trial lawyer; Michael Richards' antics save otherwise sitcom affair), ***The Daytrippers*** (in-laws drive around NYC searching for philanderer Stanley Tucci; kookiness ensues).
DRAMA	***Night Falls on Manhattan*** (more dirty Gotham cops from Sidney Lumet; compelling, though Andy Garcia is no Pacino), ***Exit in Red*** (married beauty hooks horny Beverly Hills shrink Mickey Rourke in noirish noose; tasty Showtime cheese).
SLEEPER	***Children of the Revolution*** (leftist Judy Davis carries Stalin's love child home to Australia, where he grows up right wing; weird whimsy), ***Commandments*** (bad luck drives Aidan Quinn's vow to break all ten; not sinful enough, but fun).
RESTORATION	***The Garden of the Finzi-Continis*** (Vittorio de Sica's rich 1971 portrait of Jewish family beset by foscism), ***M*** (Fritz Long's chilling 1931 sound debut gave Peter Lorre his big break as psycho suspect; includes often-deleted lost scene).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Get in touch with your masculine side.

PLAYBOY'S PC PICKS

If a new computer is high on your holiday wish list, check out our choices for the best models across four categories. **Entry Level:** For those who don't have a lot of bucks but still want a lot of computer, we recommend Packard Bell's Multimedia PC. This $1450 machine features a 200-megahertz Pentium MMX processor, 4.3-gigabyte hard drive, 56 kbps modem, 24X CD-ROM drive and an innovative System Wizard feature that helps solve more than 5000 of the most common problems faced by novice users. **Great Gaming:** If it's high-velocity fun you're after, you won't find a better system than the Mach V, from a small company called Falcon Northwest. Each Mach V is made to order and packed with cutting-edge hardware that makes the elevated sticker price (averaging $3500 to $6000 for a high-end configuration) feel like a bargain to serious gamers. **Home-Office Workhorse:** Dell's Dimension XPS D266 is a small office computer with big power. It combines a 266-MHz Pentium 2 processor, 6.4-GB hard drive, 24X CD-ROM drive, internal Iomega Zip drive and a 17-inch monitor. The price: $2700 with modem and speakers, $2500 without. **Notebook:** Gateway 2000's Solo 9100 combines all the muscle of a desktop machine with a large, 13.3-inch active matrix screen, a combined floppy and 12X CD-ROM bay and both Universal Serial Bus and joystick ports—unheard of in portable systems. The price: about $5000.

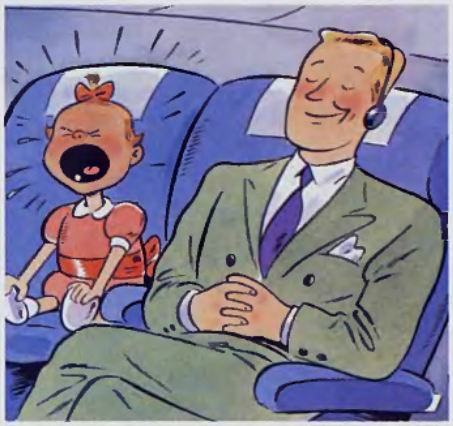
DARREN THOMPSON

THE PSX CHALLENGE

Hard-core gamers and aspiring programmers can now create their own Playstation titles with Sony's Net Yaroze, a matte-black box that resembles a Playstation console. Net Yaroze is a PC peripheral that allows you to download computer-generated creations and play them just as you would any other Playstation title. The $750 system includes all the programming software you'll need, along with access to the Net Yaroze Web site, which provides tech support and serves as a think tank for like-minded creators. But be warned: The game-development process is complex and is intended for serious hobbyists. If you're up to the challenge, the results can be lucrative. Sony plans to publish collections of the best Net Yaroze games and will pay full royalties to the lucky creators.

JUST SAY NO TO NOISE

Cranking up a personal stereo in a noisy atmosphere such as a train or plane will eventually cause your ears to ache or the sound drivers to pop from volume overload. But plug a special set of noise-cancellation headphones into that portable music maker, and you end the journey with ears and gear fresh and functioning well. Microphones in these headphones pick up the environmental noise that's coming at your ears, while an active noise-cancellation circuit generates an inverse signal that magically eliminates much of the racket. The music comes through clearly at comfortable listening levels. Consumer-grade noise-zapping headphones are proliferating. We like Koss' $200 Quiet Zone 2000 the best, followed by the bargain Noise Buster Extreme ($70). While not as powerful in quelling din, Bose's Personal ANR-1 ($300) has the lightest-weight headband, and Sony's MDR-NC20 ($200) has the best design, with the electronics built into the headphones rather than in the small, outboard box used by competitors. Tip: Experienced air travelers wear these phones without music playing—just to squelch cabin noise so they can get some sleep.



A.J. GARCES

WILD THINGS

• If your wrist needs a rest, try Kensington's award-winning Orbit. The ergonomic mouse alternative (pictured below) lets your fingers do the work vio o trockball (for moving the cursor oround the screen), and there are right and left buttons for opening and closing documents and files. Price: obout $60. • A company called Coollogic has come up with a TV Internet terminal thot rivols the boxes offered by Web TV. Coollogic's CL-3000 ollows you to navigote the Web with Netscape or Microsoft's Internet Navigator rather than Web TV's proprietary browser. It also features a 33.6 kbps modem, a printer port and a Zip drive for downlooding data. The price: $600. • Looking for on eosy way to lood troditional pictures on to your computer? Then check out Storm Technology's Easy Photo Reader. This $100 color scanner was designed exclusively for transferring snapshot-size images to a PC for use in homemode greeting cards, e-mail or other computer documents. • Hi-Vol, Inc. has come up with o unique DVD product. The Hi-Vol PC to TV Home Entertainment System is o PC upgrode kit that ollows you to transmit DVD software from your computer to your television set—wirelessly. It costs about $850. • Panasonic has introduced the Clip-On, a business card–sized color video comero thot clips to a notebook's display and plugs into a PC-card slot. Laptop owners con use it to create and send video e-moil and for videoconferencing. It also transmits sound. Price: obout $550.

MULTIMEDIA REVIEWS & NEWS

Because some CD-ROM sales have tanked, we thought there would be slim pickings for the holidays. Wrong. Some of the most highly anticipated Playstation, Nintendo 64 and computer titles will be released just in time to stuff stockings. Among them is Riven, the long-awaited sequel to Myst. Here's our list of picks for the Christmas season. Prices range from $30 to $200.

FOR ACTION ADVENTURERS

Marathon game players, get your coffee ready. ***Riven*** will arrive just in time for Christmas. Combining gorgeous graphics with better puzzles and a deeper story line, Riven has you discovering new worlds, in search of Atrus' wife, Catherine. (By Red Orb Entertainment, for Windows 95 and Mac.) The second-most-anticipated game of the season, ***Final Fantasy VII,*** is already a blockbuster in Japan and has been called the greatest role-playing adventure game ever. The story pits a group of rebels against a global corporation whose exploitation of natural resources threatens to destroy the planet. (By Square Soft, for Playstation.) Scoring big points for originality is ***Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee,*** a game in which you help a lovable alien save his species from extinction by using teamwork to solve ingenious story-based puzzles. (By GT Interactive, for Windows 95 and Playstation.) Trekkers will want to race to stores at warp speed for ***Star Trek: Secret of Vulcan Fury,*** the first really good Star Trek game, complete with all the voices of the original cast. (By Interplay, for Windows 95.) Digital pin-up girl and archaeological explorer Lara Croft returns in ***Tomb Raider II,*** a sequel that looks and plays even better than the groundbreaking original. (By Eidos, for Windows 95 and Playstation.) John Romero, the creator of Doom and Quake, left id Software last spring to form his own company, Ion Storm. ***Daikatana,*** the first release from Romero's new venture, is a wild fighting and role-playing game in which you star as a badass samurai. (For Windows 95.) ***Jedi Knight,*** the outstanding sequel to Dark Forces, supplies a pulse-pounding mixture of first-person shoot-'em-up action, top-notch graphics and Star Wars mythology. (By Lucas Arts, for Windows 95.) For James Bond fans, there's ***Golden Eye 007,*** an impressive action game with weapons and bad guys galore that captures the essence of Ian Fleming's spy series. (By Nintendo, for N64.)

Lara is back, bustier than ever

SIM LUCK

Descent fans are going to love ***Forsaken,*** which contributes much-improved graphics and game controls to the futuristic flight-combat genre. (By Acelaim, for Windows 95, Playstation and N64.) If modern-day realism is more your thing, check out ***Longbow 2,*** another flight-combat simulator that features enhanced multiplayer capabilities and four times the graphic detail of the best-selling original. (By Electronic Arts, for Windows 95.) ***i Panzer '44,*** a World War Two tank-combat simulation, offers superior technical accuracy and hard-hitting action. (By Interactive Magic, for Windows 95.)

Riven is riveting

BEST OF THE BIZARRE

Shiny Entertainment, the creator of Earthworm Jim and MDK, has outdone itself with ***Messiah,*** a gritty 3D action title in which you take on the role of a cherub fighting the forces of evil. (For Windows 95.) Fans of Dreamworks' Neverhood will rejoin the kooky character named Klayman in ***Skullmonkeys,*** a wonderfully odd and action-packed Claymation game with weapons such as the hamster shield and universal enema that delivers all of the personality—and none of the tedium—of its predecessor. (For Playstation.) Douglas Adams (*Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*) goes digital with ***Starship Titanic,*** an offbeat adventure laced with the author's wry humor. (By Simon & Schuster Interactive, for Windows 95 and Mac.) Phil Hartman (*News Radio* and *Saturday Night Live*) lends his voice to ***Blasto,*** an original retrofuturistic action shooter game starring the galaxy's most pompous superhero. (By Sony, for Playstation.) ***Akuji the Heartless*** uses great graphics, puzzles and bloodletting combat to tell the tale of a young man whose heart is ripped out on his wedding day and who must fight voodoo and other sinister jungle forces to make himself whole again. (By Crystal Dynamics, for Windows 95.)

SPORTS AND THE GREAT OUTDOORS

NFL Gameday '98 boasts realistic graphics, awesome game play and Sony's patented "total control passing" system, which provides enhanced precision when it comes to throwing the ball. (For Playstation.) ***March Madness '98*** delivers all of the excitement of college basketball, with 107 men's teams and, for the first time, eight women's teams. (By Electronic Arts, for Playstation and Windows 95.) Events such as bobsledding, luging, skiing and speed skating come to the N64 in ***Nagano Winter Olympics '98.*** (By Konami of America.) And, finally, every page of every issue of all 108 years of the legendary magazine has been artfully assembled in the ***Complete National Geographic,*** an amazing 30-disc set that will take you to every corner of the world and outer space. (By Mindscape, for Windows 95 and Mac.)

CYBER SCOOP

If you have a personal question regarding AIDS or HIV, check out the Body at www.thebody.com. In addition to offering a wealth of health information and resources, the site allows you to tap into its panel of experts, who will respond promptly to all AIDS-related inquiries posted in its forum.

Patti Britton, a San Francisca–based sex therapist, has opened one of the Web's first sex clinics. Cyberpatients can log on to www.sexclinic.com to discuss intimacy issues, talk sex with other surfers or obtain the latest info on sexual health and pleasure.

DIGITAL DUDS

Space Bunnies Must Die: If the game were as clever as its title, this lame-looking action shooter might have hopped off store shelves. Instead, we predict copies will be collecting bunnies—of the dust kind.

Duckman: Our dud-hunters have declared open season on this tiresome and poorly rendered graphic misadventure. Skip it.

See what's happening on Playboy's Home Page at http://www.playboy.com.

WHERE & HOW TO BUY ON PAGE 195.

BOOKS

MASTERS OF THE MACABRE

Anne Rice and Stephen King have conjured up some fiendish delights just in time for the holidays. Rice, that literary virtuoso of sexual and religious obsessions, has written ***Violin*** (Knopf), the tale of a widow haunted by death and music. Seduced by a Stradivarius and whisked through time to meet Beethoven in 19th century Vienna, the tormented woman joins such wildly imaginative characters as those in Rice's *Vampire Chronicles*.

Stephen King admits that his *Dark Tower* series (begun several years before *Carrie*) is the continuing passion of his literary life. Fans have waited five years for this fourth installment of the futuristic adventures of Roland the Gunslinger. ***The Dark Tower IV: Wizard and Glass*** (Donald M. Grant limited-edition hardcover, Plume paperback) is well worth the wait. King is not only a gifted storyteller, but also a mythmaker whose parables resonate with both past and contemporary cultures.—DIGBY DIEHL

WAR IS HELL

Long before recorded history, humans slashed and slaughtered one another with blood-splattering relish. Never satisfied with their killing machines, they went from catapults to cannons to nuclear missiles that have the potential to turn the planet into Death Valley. Most students of war trace its origin to the hunter. They argue that the tactics and weapons of primitive hunters evolved into what we watched on the tube during Desert Storm. Now a brave and damn smart woman, Barbara Ehrenreich, has trashed this theory in ***Blood Rites: Origins and History of the Passions of War*** (Metropolitan Books). She contends the emotions that drive men to war come from our struggles to stay out of the stomachs of beasts. War comes not from our being the hunter, but from our being the hunted. She asserts that because we spent too many years ducking carnivores, the tactics we developed to stay alive became the underlying basis for war. —COL. DAVID HACKWORTH

PAUL LEE

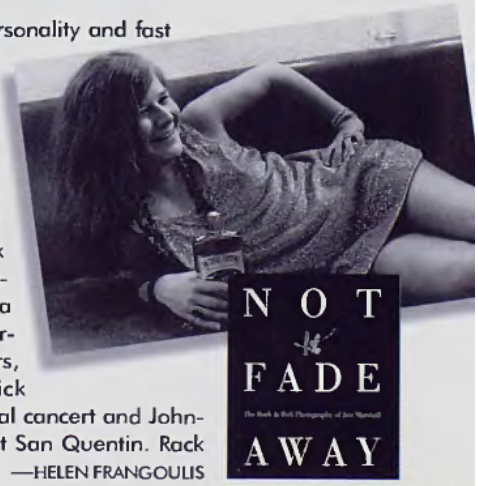
MAGNIFICENT OBSESSIONS

Erotic art is in the eye of the beholder, and four new coffee-table books explore its diversity. ***Ars Erotica: An Arousing History of Erotic Art*** (Rizzoli) by Edward Lucie-Smith features 125 color illustrations of works by the great masters as well as erotic photography and sensuous prose and poetry. Collectors, photography buffs and fans of the timeless pin-up will love ***The Pirelli Calendar 1964–1997*** (Rizzoli). This collection of 264 sexy photos was shot by some of the world's top photographers. If rubber, leather, nylons, high heels and bondage turn you on, catch up with ***Beauty Parade*** (Taschen) by fetish king Eric Kroll. A pioneer of bondage imagery with his first book, *Fetish Girls*, Kroll is always hunting for edgy ways to photograph women. Finally, there's comic-book eroticism in ***The Art of Eric Stanton: For the Man Who Knows His Place*** (Taschen). Each volume is a coffee-table conversation starter. —HELEN FRANGOULIS

ON THE ROAD

American literature is rich with stories of the adventure traveler—from Melville to Kerouac to Theroux. For all these writers, the journey begins as an escape and ends up being something more. So it is for Gary Paulsen, who writes eloquently about his motorcycle trip from New Mexico to Fairbanks, Alaska and back in ***Pilgrimage on a Steel Ride*** (Harcourt Brace). Naturally, his bike is a Harley-Davidson, the kind he had been dreaming about owning for much of his life. The round-trip is just about 10,000 miles (including a trip through Minnesota). Paulsen writes about the landscapes and the people along the way, but his meditations on freedom and solitude while roaring through the Northwest are the highlights. This is great fun for an armchair adventurer and, like Sebastian Junger's ***The Perfect Storm*** (Norton) and Jon Krakauer's ***Into Thin Air*** (Villard), it's a perfect way to travel light. —DIGBY DIEHL

PICTURE THIS:
Famous for his colorful personality and fast living, photographer Jim Marshall—who started taking pictures in San Francisco's acid heyday—shares his rock-and-roll images in ***Not Fade Away*** (Little, Brown). The 124 duotone photos in this rock history include Jimi and Janis at Golden Gate Park, a young Jerry Garcia, Jim Marrison, the Allman Brothers, John Lennon at Candlestick Park before the Beatles' final concert and Johnny Cash flipping the bird at San Quentin. Rock and roll never forgets. —HELEN FRANGOULIS



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MEN

By ASA BABER

Gentlemen, I bring you good news. It turns out that we are, for the first time in recorded history, free of any major obligations to the women in our lives—if you believe some of my female sources.

According to several of my gal pals—each of whom recently let me know her thinking on this subject—women have now reached such a level of independence that they no longer need any significant help from men. Indeed, to hear these folks tell it, all that women want from us today is slivers of support while they fulfill their ambitions in life. Men, to them, are irrelevant creatures who might be useful for an occasional car repair, but that's about it.

"You guys just don't get it," Jill says to me at our health club as we work out on side-by-side Stair Masters. "A lot of men still want to be heroes who save the day. They strut around like Hercules and pretend they can protect us, but I have news: We don't need to be saved."

"Wow," I say. "That's amazing."

"Yes, it is," Jill agrees. "We are totally capable of handling our own affairs. So you boys should stop acting like knights in shining armor. You're all dressed up with no place to joust. Because the days when we needed male chivalry are dead and gone."

I feel winded after that disclosure. "I guess that's why you go so much faster on your Stair Master than I do on mine," I say. "My armor weighs me down. So does my shield and sword."

"You guys are such jerks," Jill says, laughing. "You still fantasize about being heroes to us, don't you?"

"Not always, but sometimes," I say. "I guess it's genetic. It starts at an early age. It has something to do with our mothers and our teachers. They make us feel good when we help them. They praise us for it and we enjoy being useful."

"The heroic-male-rescues-the-helpless-female fantasy, right? It's like a bad movie. You charge across the drawbridge and fight your way to the castle tower and save the damsel in distress from impending doom."

"Yeah," I say, nodding. "It's something like that. In our dreams, anyway."

"After you slash through dragons and break down doors, you pull the damsel into your arms for a kiss."

"Sure," I say. "In our fantasies, we've just risked our lives for them, so we figure they'll be grateful to us."

MINAKO SAITOH

NO MORE DAMSELS IN DISTRESS?

"And may I ask what your damsel is wearing as you save her?" Jill says.

"A flimsy low-cut gown I can see through in the torchlight," I chuckle. "She has an innocent face and magnificent breasts and swivel hips."

Jill shakes her head. "You men bring sex into everything, don't you? I pity you. We're not looking for Sir Galahad anymore. Just send me a plumber or a carpenter. Give me a guy who can keep the bathroom clean and I'll take him. For us, small is beautiful, Ace."

"I'm really glad I talked to you," I say as I reach over and shake Jill's hand. "You've changed my life. You're telling me that it's a whole new ball game out there between men and women, right?"

"Right." Jill pumps her fist in the air. "So get with the program."

"I will!" I say as I climb off the Stair Master and walk down to the men's locker room with a new spring in my step. Jill is the third woman this week to give me these insights, and I am starting to believe their stories.

"Free at last, free at last, great God almighty, we are free at last," I yell to my buddies.

They look at me as if I've lost it. "What the hell are you talking about, Ace?" Marty asks me.

"It's a new universe for guys now," I say. "It's up to us to understand that fact and grasp the opportunity! Because we are free! Women don't need us anymore. They're strong and autonomous and ready to control their own lives. Without any help from us."

"Says who?" Marty asks.

"Says Jill, for one." I smile. "She explained it to me."

"Explained what?"

"That we're trapped in an old-fashioned rescue mode when it comes to the way we view women. We think they want us to protect them, but they are 21st century women, liberated and powerful, while we're still muddling around in rusty armor of the Middle Ages."

"Jill said that?" Marty says, smiling.

"Yeah," I answer.

Marty puts an arm around my shoulder. "Did you ever think there might be another side to it, kid?"

"How could there be another side to anything a woman says today?" I ask.

Marty points. "You see Ken over there? Jill got Ken's job four years after he recruited her for his firm. She begged him for work and asked him to mentor her. Now he's been downsized and she's in fat city."

"Well," I say, wincing, "maybe she did not know then what she knows now."

"OK, what about Jack? He was married to Jill's cousin. He had to pay her alimony and give her half his business when they got divorced. He's rescuing her despite himself, no?"

"I don't know about that one," I admit. "I'd have to study the case."

"Then there's Harry. Poor Harry. Jill's best friend, Laura, sued him for sexual harassment on the job. And after the typical he-said-she-said debate, Laura got most of Harry's savings in a settlement out of court. So where does Harry fit in terms of rescue and support? *If women have no need for us, why don't they just leave us alone?*" Marty yells.

"I'm not sure," I say. "I'll check with Jill tomorrow."

But as I say it, I can feel myself saddling my horse and oiling my armor. And not for a rescue mission for some damsel in distress, either, but for an extended campaign of self-defense in a confusing and difficult struggle.

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A MAN'S GUIDE *to buying* DIAMONDS

ARE YOU *one of the* TWO MILLION victims of ENGAGEMENT RING anxiety?

1. Relax. Guys simply are not supposed to know this stuff. Dads rarely say, "Son, let's talk diamonds."
2. But it's still your call. So read on.
3. Spend wisely. It's tricky because no two diamonds are alike. Formed in the earth millions of years ago, diamonds are found in the most remote corners of the world. De Beers, the world's largest diamond company, has over 100 years' experience in mining and valuing. They sort rough diamonds into over 5,000 grades before they go on to be cut and polished. So be sure you know what you're buying. Two diamonds of the same size may vary widely in quality. And if a price looks too good to be true, it probably is.
4. Learn the jargon. Your guide to quality and value is a combination of four characteristics called *The 4 C's.* They are: *Cut,* not the same as shape, but refers to the way the facets, or flat surfaces, are angled. A better cut offers more brilliance; *Color,* actually, close to no color is rarest; *Clarity,* the fewer natural marks, or "inclusions," the better; *Carat weight,* the larger the diamond, usually the more rare.
5. Determine your price range. What do you spend on the one woman in the world who is smart enough to marry you? Many people use the *two months' salary guideline.* Spend less and the relatives will talk. Spend more and they'll rave.
6. Watch her as you browse. Go by how she reacts, not by what she says. She may be reluctant to tell you what she really wants. Then once you have an idea of her taste, don't involve her in the actual purchase. You both will cherish the memory of your surprise.
7. Find a reputable jeweler, someone you can trust, to ensure you're getting a diamond you can be proud of. Ask questions. Ask friends who've gone through it. Ask the jeweler you choose why two diamonds that look the same are priced differently. Avoid Happy Harry's Diamond Basement.
8. *Learn more.* For the booklet *"How to buy diamonds you'll be proud to give,"* call **1-800-FOREVER,** Dept. 21.
9. Finally, think romance. And don't compromise. This is one of life's most important occasions. You want a diamond as unique as your love. *Besides, how else can two months' salary last forever?*

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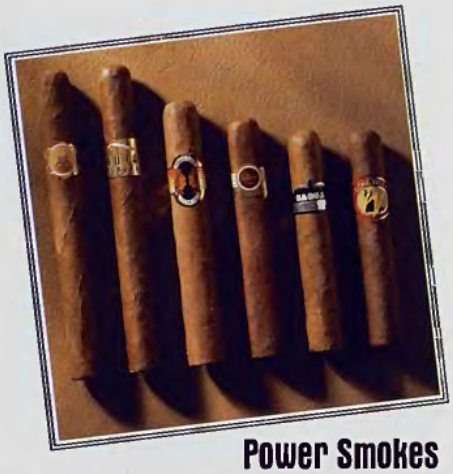

Power Smokes

If you're searching for new stogies, we've smoked out the best. Left to right: Oliveros Coroneles are premium cigars from one of the Dominican Republic's top tobacco growers. Hoja Cubana Churchills feature leoves from Nicaragua, Honduras, Ecuador and the Dominican Republic. Indian Tabac Tomahawks are full bodied. Padrón Exclusivos are similar to Cuban cigars. Caoba Platinums are smooth. Lone Wolf Robustos are smokes from Jim Belushi and Chuck Norris.

Wines for Christmas

Do something special for the holidays—indulge in really great wine. If turkey (or goose) is on the menu, consider these excellent whites: From the Loire Valley, a 1995 Sancerre (Comte Lafond, about $25) or a 1992 Pouilly Fumé (Baron de L, about $60). From Burgundy, a 1995 Puligny-Montrachet (Château de Puligny Montrachet, about $36). From California, the 1994 Cakebread Cellar's Chardonnay Reserve (about $36). If a rib roast is being served, here's our choice of reds: From France's Rhône Valley, try a 1990 Côte Rôtie (Guigal, about $40). From Bordeaux, a 1986 Château La Mission Haut-Brion (about $80) or a 19B6 Château Palmer (about $66). From California, a 1991 Robert Mondavi Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve (about $60).

Best Seat in the House

Macanudo, a Jamaican company whose name is synonymous with fine tobacco, has taken the logical step of creating the perfect seat in which to relax while you fire up one of its Vintage Cabinet Selectians. The Macanudo London Men's Club Chair (pictured here) looks as if it could have been the throne of Winston Churchill or Rudyard Kipling, but it's actually made in North Carolina of leather that's as rich as your best double corona. And the $2200 price includes a pillow embroidered with the Macanudo crest, lest you forget your chair's pedigree. With a price that's less than the cost of some humidors, it's the perfect spot in which to enjoy a smoke, a drink and a first edition.

MANTRACK

Lobster Fed Ex

Let somebody else cook the turkey. This year, do what Arnold Schwarzenegger, LeAnn Rimes, Eric Clopton and the Los Angeles Lakers do: Mail-order the best barbecued smoked turkey, ribs and brisket in Texas from Sonny Bryon's Smokehouse Barbecue (800-5-SONNYS). Prefer Memphis-style ribs? Call Corky's B-B-Q at 800-926-7597 and you'll have as many rocks as you want via Fed Ex. Or have a winter seafood picnic, complete with lobster and chowder, shipped from Clamboke Celebrations (800-423-403B). For duck or pheasant contact D'Artagnon at 800-DARTAGN. Or take a gamy approach with antelope or wild boar from Broken Arrow Ranch in Texas (800-962-4263). Remember the night David Lettermon revealed his passion for truffles from Minerva Street Chocolates by pitching them into the audience? Call Minerva at 313-996-4090 to share them—lobbed or passed—with your own guests.

Luxury Leather, We Presume

Like a great pair of jeans or fine cowboy boots, Levenger's Stonley Traveler (top right), named after Henry Morton ("Dr. Livingstone, I presume") Stonley, gets better with age. The leather is full-grain cowhide—tumbled, waxed and polished—and the bag measures 14"x10". That's just enough room for a copy of *West With the Night* and your laptop—plus a notebook and a cell phone stashed in the front pockets. Price: $289. Levenger has more Stonley-inspired products in the works. The Trager Laptop Brief below the Traveler is the carry-on to tote when you don't want to be noticed. The bag is 1000 Denier Dupont Cordura Plus (with leather trim and metal hardware), and it doesn't look like what it is—a padded, legal-size briefcase designed to house a notebook computer. Price: $90.

The Buck Tool Stops Here

Still lugging around that tackle box full of screwdrivers, pliers and files in case you need to tighten the hood straps on your Morgan or perform other repair-missions impossible? That's fine if you also use the pocket protector from your insurance agent. Otherwise, join the Nineties and drop about $60 for a multifunctional Buck Tool, from Buck Knives. The model 360FL pictured here features ten functions (including pliers, wire cutter, blade, file, bottle-and-can opener and assorted screwdrivers) housed in a palm-sized package with nonslip handles that won't pinch like a son of a bitch if you make a wrong move. (The implements lock into place, then disengage with a push-button release.) With a little twirl, the Buck Tool opens 180 degrees for an extended reach or locks at 90 degrees for greater leverage and torque. Buck even throws in a sheath as part of the deal. (A model with a pocket clip is also available.) It's made in the U.S. and comes with Buck Tool's lifetime warranty.

Jet Set Eats

Airport food never looked so chic. The restaurant Typhoon, situated in the administration building at Santa Monica's municipal airport, offers a panoramic view of ocean and mountains and specializes in the exotic fare of the Orient. As private planes take off and land, you can sample Chinese, Thai, Japanese, Korean, Philippine, Vietnamese and Burmese cuisine while sipping a single-malt whiskey or one of the eatery's Asian beers. Our favorite dish? Korean barbecue beef ribs. Adventurous diners can try Taiwanese-style crickets with raw garlic, chilis and Asian basil. You can also watch for high-flying stars either from the dining room or the open-air observation deck. Typhoon boasts an eclectic and famous clientele—Michael Mann threw a wrap party there, and Kurt Russell, Goldie Hawn, Meryl Streep, Al Pacino, Harrison Ford and Oliver Stone have also shown up. (It seems that Typhoon proprietor Brian Vidor—whose father directed movies and whose brother owns New York's Tavern on the Green—has Hollywood and restaurants in his blood.) Each Monday, pilots and passengers gather for jazz night. The restaurant is a hit with couples on first dates, too, maybe because it serves chiew—an aphrodisiac elixir that includes gecko, sea horse, caterpillar and ginseng. Drink it before joining the mile-high club. For seats, call 310-390-6565.

WHERE & HOW TO BUY ON PAGE 195.

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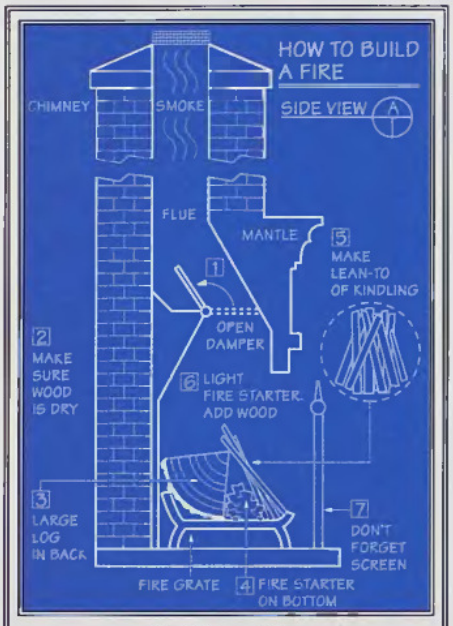

Get Fired Up

There's no more certain way to botch a romantic winter evening than to fill the condo with woodsmoke. Here's the right way to light her fire. First, make sure the damper is open. If the smoke from a match doesn't rise up the chimney, the damper is closed. Next, make sure the wood is dry. (Dry hardwood logs will make a ringing sound when knocked together.) Lay a large log at the back of the grate. Place a handful of tinder in front of that log (try birch bark or pitch-saturated fatwood sticks). Place finger-thick pieces of kindling over the fire starter, resting them against the log like a small lean-to. Light the fire starter. Allow it to ignite the kindling, then gradually add bigger pieces of wood. A fireplace screen is a must.

Total Control

If you need a remote to find all your other remotes, do something smart—consolidate. Marantz' RC2000 ($250, pictured at right) is one of the best all-in-one "smart" remotes. It may look intimidating, but this smooth operator is actually easy to use. It's programmed with basic commands and can learn virtually all the control codes of your current remotes. It features macro keys capable of storing a series of up to 20 commands at the press of a button. Hit one key and your TV turns on, your VCR kicks in, your receiver powers up and the lights dim. Lighted keys and an LCD screen also make adjustments easy.

Porto Bello

A traditional cap to your holiday meal is a pairing of port and cheese. If port is a new experience, here's a primer. Port is a fortified wine made in the Douro Valley of Portugal. Its name comes from the city from which it's shipped, Oporto. Vintage port is the finest variety but can require 20 to 30 years of aging before it comes to its full potential. Other varieties will do nicely. Aged tawny ports are often extremely good: Try Taylor Fladgate 20-Year-Old, Cockburn 10-Year-Old or Quinta do Noval 20-Year-Old. Late bottled vintage port derives from a single year and is usually ready to drink immediately. Try Taylor Fladgate LBV, Fonseca LBV or Croft LBV. Vintage character ports are premium ruby ports aged in wood. Styles vary widely; our choices include Graham's Six Grapes and Fonseca Bin 27. Benjamin Tawny is a surprisingly good port from Australia. Now for the cheese. Stilton, an English blue cheese, is the traditional accompaniment. Other blue-veined cheeses, such as gorgonzola, also go well. If you're in the mood for something less complex, try an extra-sharp aged cheddar. Walnuts also complement port.

Snakebit

The Plymouth Prowler has barely hit the streets and already the folks at Chrysler have developed a new concept car. At a glance, the long-hood, short-rear deck styling of the Dodge Copperhead gives it a son-of-Viper look that we like. (It's actually eight inches shorter and three inches narrower than the big snake.) It's no accident that the car also reminds us of a classic Sixties sports car. John Herlitz, Chrysler's vice president of product design, admits the company admires great designs of the past, even when they're someone else's. The Copperhead's bite comes from a new 220-horsepower V-6 coupled to a five-speed gearbox. Shod with huge Goodyear tires and fitted with ABS and disc brakes, it promises handling that will put to rest any queasy memories you might have of the cornering eccentricities of 30-year-old British roadsters. And, yes, the Copperhead (which is made only in one color—bright orange) has snakeskin-patterned upholstery. Dodge is keeping mum, but we predict that the Copperhead will be out by the year 2000, priced in the low $40,000s.

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THE PLAYBOY ADVISOR

My wife and I are planning a *Playboy After Dark* party and need advice on how to make it a success. We'll return to 1963, the last year it was cool to be an adult, and require all guests to come in character. Some of the activities will include a Sean Connery look-alike contest, Playmate of the Year competition, baccarat tournament and music and dancing from the era. We'll also offer good food and a well-stocked bar. Can you give us any other suggestions for a successful gathering?—R.B., Bakersfield, California

The show you're thinking of is "Playboy's Penthouse," which ran for two seasons beginning in 1959 and then returned for a short run in 1963. "Playboy After Dark" ran for two seasons beginning in 1968. The penthouse in the original series was on the 30th floor, and there were always plenty of wide martinis and tall women. For your gathering, clear some space for dancing, and arrange the couches and chairs for conversation. The host makes the party, so you'll play the role of Hef. Looking trim and confident in your tux, you circulate and set the tone and pace. Encourage your guests to entertain and be entertained. On the list: Ella Fitzgerald, Shel Silverstein, Lenny Bruce, Ray Charles, Sammy Davis Jr., Count Basie, Dizzy Gillespie, Della Reese, Tony Bennett and Buddy Rich. Next time around, throw that "Playboy After Dark" party. Invite comedians such as Bill Cosby, Bob Newhart, Carol Burnett, George Carlin and Mort Sahl, and performers such as Clara Ward, Marvin Gaye, B.B. King and Johnny Mathis. Listen as Dick Martin expounds on "those crazy little fuzzy butts" on the Bunnies. And tell your single male guests to keep their eyes peeled for their own Barbi Benton. Hef met her on the set.

I never could remember the rest of the "Man from Nantucket" limerick either (*The Playboy Advisor*, August), but you jogged my memory. How about these favorites: "There was a young man from St. Clair/Who was fucking his wife on the stair./In the middle of his stroke, the banister broke/And he finished her off in midair." Or, "There was a young man from Trent/Whose dick was so long that it bent./To save his wife trouble, he put it in double,/And instead of coming, he went."—J.M., Memphis, Tennessee

Thanks for writing the Advisor,/You've left us feeling much wiser./If your lady likes poems, and you've taken her home,/This isn't the way to entice her.

Over the past few months I have gotten ahead of myself when it comes to cigars. I have received a few boxes as gifts, and have bought a few. My humidor is too small to hold the boxes, and I don't want my stash to turn to powder. How long will the cigars stay fresh in a box that's sealed in cellophane?—K.A., Chicago, Illinois

Our friendly tobacconist, Harvey at the Cigar King, says to keep the sealed boxes intact until you're ready to shift the cigars to a humidor. The best way is to find a sealable plastic bag large enough to hold the cigar box. Sprinkle some distilled water in the bag and then shake it out so the inside is barely moist. Place the box inside the bag and close it. Put it in a closet or on a shelf where the temperature is moderate. As Harvey says, "Any place you're comfortable, the cigars are comfortable." Check every few weeks and keep the interior of the bag slightly wet. Your cigars will be ready for you when you are ready for them.

During intercourse, do women prefer short strokes or long ones? I try to vary my technique, but sometimes my partner says I'm not pushing deep enough, or that I'm pushing too deep. Which way should I go?—H.D., Akron, Ohio

Go the way your partner tells you to go. If there are no verbal signals, pay attention to the nonverbal ones. Don't make a plan—sometimes shallow is good, sometimes you need to go deep. In its "Guide to Getting It On," the staff of Goofy Foot Press (800-310-7529) shares a Taoist technique in which the man repeats a sequence of nine shallow thrusts and one deep. Our advice: Don't count out loud.

How can I be sure that a used car doesn't have any dirty little secrets? I once read about a service that offers a history of any vehicle. Does this company still exist?—M.D., Queens, New York

You're thinking of Carfax (800-346-3846 or carfaxreport.com). The company has a database of 190 million cars and light trucks dating from 1981, including 19 million (in 47 states) that have problems. A Carfax report, which costs $12.50 on the Net or $20 via fax, can help you determine if the odometer has been rolled back, if the vehicle identification number matches the description of the car, how many times the title has changed hands, or if the vehicle was wrecked and rebuilt, bought back as a lemon, damaged by flooding or junked and salvaged. The company also has plans to collect information on recalls, emissions inspections, whether the car was rented, leased or a fleet vehicle, and claims made to insurance companies. As Carfax will tell you, the report shouldn't be considered comprehensive. But it's an inexpensive precaution. To order, you'll need the vehicle's 17-character VIN, found on the driver's-side dash, and the 16-character credit-card number found in your wallet. A similar service, Vehicle History Report (800-348-2047), uses records from each state's Department of Motor Vehicles, more than 350 insurance companies, 4000 car dealers and 10,000 repair shops.

My wife has discovered that fellatio can stop hiccups. Unfortunately, she lost the hiccups in middeed, got the giggles and left me feeling that the cure was not quite complete. Does the Advisor know of a handy way to cause and sustain hiccups?—S.M., Walnut Creek, California

No. But it sounds like what you really need is a cure for the giggles.

There is a sexy girl at work who always makes me horny. She's 18 and I'm 19. She messes around with her hair, licks her lips, puts her fingers in her mouth and pretends she is sucking cock and always gives me the tongue. She makes these gestures every day and is constantly blowing kisses at me. I like it a lot and she knows it. I usually sit there like a geek, smiling and shifting in my seat. I'm inexperienced in these situations. When I ask her if she wants to go out, she always has something else going on. She has given me her pager number, but when I call she never calls back. What should I do?—A.J., St. Paul, Minnesota

Ignore her. She'll try harder. Ignore her some more. Eventually she'll ask why you're ignoring her. You'll shrug and say, "I'm not ignoring you." Then you'll write down your number and go back to work. She's playing you, and you won't be played. Drives 'em crazy.

I just graduated from college and haven't found a job, but I'd still like to put together a stereo system. I figure I'll buy one quality component and settle

ILLUSTRATION BY ISTVAN BANYAI

for inexpensive stuff elsewhere. As I obtain the money, I'll assemble my dream team. What component should I start with? I listen mostly to compact discs and thought a quality player would be a smart bet.—P.R., Atlanta, Georgia

You're right. The closer it is to the source, the more influential the component. Some audiophiles argue that the speakers are the core of a system, but that's like saying you should buy a mediocre computer and a fantastic monitor because that's what you look at. Others say the amp is the key. But an amplifier can handle only what it's fed. If even the best amp receives garbage from the CD player, or if data are missing, it will only amplify the errors. When shopping for a high-end CD player, check out offerings from manufacturers such as Marantz, Rega, Naim or California Audio Labs.

My girlfriend and I are considering a cruise, but we don't want to spend our vacation with food poisoning. Are ships rated for sanitation?—R.Y., Tampa, Florida

Every cruise ship that docks in a U.S. port is subject to surprise semiannual inspections by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The agency checks the drinking water, food preparation and storage, potential for contamination and cleanliness. The report we requested included ratings of more than 100 international passenger ships—only a few scored less than satisfactory. One ("The Galaxy") earned a perfect score. To find how your ship rates, write the Vessel Sanitation Program, 1015 North America Way, Room 107, Miami, Florida 33132, or point your Web browser to ftp://ftp.cdc.gov/pub/ship_inspections.

I'm a 25-year-old with a foot fetish. My girlfriend has the most beautiful feet I have ever seen. She is understanding of my fetish and allows me to have sex with her feet. For some reason, hot-pink polish on her toenails drives me nuts. I also love to see wrinkles in her soles, especially when she's sitting in a chair and curls her toes on the ground. It seems to me that there are an enormous number of men who have foot fetishes and are just afraid to admit it. My girlfriend once met a fellow who begged to rub her feet. Another guy commented on her painted toenails, and even had the guts to say, "I'll bet he does your feet," referring to me. Does the Advisor hear from many foot fetishists?—K.T., Fort Worth, Texas

Sure. Foot fetishes are common, in varying degrees. What man can't remember his first foot job? At the other extreme, we receive a fair number of letters from readers who can't fathom why we don't publish close-ups of the Playmates' feet. That's not to say we can't appreciate the graceful lines, suckable toes and delicate balance of a woman's cloppers. We've even heard image consultants complain that open-toed shoes reveal too much "cleavage" for the office. Some theorize that men fixate on women's feet because they're harder to reach than the genitals. Feet are also less demanding sexually—you don't have to arouse her toes—which may appeal to men with performance anxieties. We've always felt that fetishes are more fun when you have a few to choose from. If you are focused on feet to the exclusion of every other aspect of a woman, or can't have an orgasm unless feet are involved, your sex life isn't as rich as it could be.

I've heard that deep-throating a guy can increase your risk of getting AIDS. Is that true?—P.F., Cleveland, Ohio

Yes, if you're blowing someone who is HIV positive and isn't wearing a condom. The cells that researchers believe HIV infects, known as CD4+ Langerhanses, are not near the surface of the tissues that line the mouth. But farther down in the throat, near the tonsils or adenoid glands, these cells are abundant and accessible. In general, gentle oral sex is a low-risk way to transmit the virus. Deep-throating increases the risk. The bottom line is that you shouldn't have unprotected oral sex or intercourse with anyone whose HIV status you aren't certain about.

The other night my girlfriend knocked on my door and told me that my dreams were about to come true. She had persuaded her best friend to have a threeway. Since it was also my girlfriend's fantasy to have sex with a woman, her friend performed on us both. After it was over, everyone agreed that we'd do it again from time to time. My question is, how do I tell my girlfriend and her friend how much I appreciated their fulfilling my fantasy?—H.E., Hammond, Indiana

"Thank you, thank you, thank you!" should suffice. Say it on your knees.

Would you settle an argument? I say you should leave at least ten percent of the cost of the round each time you visit the bar. My friend doesn't see a need to tip, since you're retrieving your own drinks. Or, you're in a crowded nightspot and the waitress never finds you. After you run to the bar, you wait forever to be served. Of course the staff is working hard, but the service is still poor, so you don't tip. My friend also says that if he is sitting at the same table all evening, he tips on every other round, but that sometimes the waitress gets snooty until she figures it out. What are a drinker's tipping guidelines?—J.V., Dayton, Ohio

Be generous but not showy. To that end, leave silver for a single drink, a buck or two for drinks you can carry alone and 20 percent on the first of larger rounds. Tip ten percent to 15 percent on subsequent trips. If a nightspot is crowded, that's all the more reason to tip well: The bartender and wait staff will remember yours in the line of faces. Tipping every other round isn't wise—you should give the waitperson at least a buck each time, and more if the place is hopping. Regardless of where you are, keep in mind that anyone who sacrifices their feet and calves so you can have a good time earns their keep.

About four months ago I broke up with my girlfriend to see if she was "the one." I messed around with two other girls and didn't feel the same way I did toward my ex. So I told her I wanted to get back together. I have even thought about marrying her after we finish school. She told me she was seeing someone and had begun a "soul search" to figure out if we should be together. Now I can't sleep or eat because I'm always thinking about her. Should I move on or wait for her to make up her mind? Everyone tells me she is leading me on to find out if I'm serious about continuing our relationship. I am confused and depressed. What should I do?—P.P., New Orleans, Louisiana

When we can't have something, we desire it even more. At some point you doubted this relationship and left it, which gave you a sense of power. You were no longer attached to one woman. Bring them on! In some ways, as you discovered, that prospect can be as frightening as commitment. Now you're being told, in turn, that you may not be "the one," and it hurts. But don't get caught in the lie of romantic destiny. There isn't one person out there waiting for you under a star. Your ex may have been the one for this period in your life, and perhaps that period is over. While she's deciding whether she wants to continue the relationship, distance yourself and decide what you want. Don't use your obsession with her as a guide; it's a normal reaction to being turned out. Your ex may decide the relationship is over. If she does, don't feel you made a mistake by leaving. You eventually would have ended up in the same place—apart—and look at the time you saved! These are the sometimes painful lessons of youth, but in exchange, you get to be young. And if a woman doesn't want to be with you, then she's obviously not the one for the moment or for a lifetime.

All reasonable questions—from fashion, food and drink, stereo and sports cars to dating dilemmas, taste and etiquette—will be personally answered if the writer includes a self-addressed, stamped envelope. The most provocative, pertinent questions will be presented in these pages each month. Write the Playboy Advisor, PLAYBOY, *680 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60611, or advisor@playboy.com (because of volume, we cannot respond to all e-mail inquiries). Look for responses to our most frequently asked questions at www.playboy.com/faq, and check out the Advisor's latest collection of sex tricks, "365 Ways to Improve Your Sex Life" (Plume), available in bookstores or by phoning 800-423-9494.*

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BANGING THE DRUM FOR THE LORD

an oscar-worthy performance from the religious right

By ROBERT S. WIEDER

Like our military defenders, our moral defenders must constantly find new threats to protect us from in order to remain in business. Sometimes the threat has actually been around for almost 20 years, methodically (albeit imperceptibly) unraveling America's moral fiber while evading the radar of the armies of decency.

This is the case with a group called Oklahomans for Children and Families (formerly Oklahomans Against Pornography), founded in 1984 and now led by former Air Force fighter pilot Bob Anderson.

For some years, Bob, God and OCAF had contented themselves with lobbying city officials nationwide to prosecute people who posted adult content on the Internet. What gives Anderson the right? As he explains, "Me and the Lord make a majority." Since the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the federal Communications Decency Act, the wholesomeness-or-else crowd has fallen back on individual states' harmful-to-minors laws (which are, ironically, most common in states whose lawmakers often qualify as harmful to minors). OCAF hounded state legislators to pass tougher antipornography laws and local district attorneys to enforce them. By its own account, OCAF has "helped close over 150 sexually oriented businesses in Oklahoma County." It also persuaded the president of the University of Oklahoma to remove sexually explicit Internet materials from the school's computer system, in blithe indifference to student and faculty First Amendment rights.

But that's all prelude. In June, Anderson was listening to a Christian radio talk show when he heard its host denounce *The Tin Drum*, the movie adaptation of Günter Grass' allegorical novel, which won the 1979 Oscar as Best Foreign Film. The host "said it could be judged pornographic," said Anderson, "and that's all I needed to hear." (When it comes to knee-jerk reactions, liberals have nothing on the vigilantes of virtue.) Anderson checked the film out of the local library, then demanded it be removed from the collection. The library board refused.

Within 24 hours, OCAF had handed the library video over to police, who took it to a district judge. The judge ruled that *The Tin Drum* violated state obscenity laws, and plainclothes cops began confiscating copies—without the nicety of search warrants—in raids on six Oklahoma City video outlets and the homes of two rental customers.

In one stroke, Anderson engineered the violation of two of the Constitution's first ten amendments, which may be a record for a private citizen. Best of all, one of the two homes raided was that of Michael Camfield, an official with the American Civil Liberties Union. This is like making threatening calls to a CIA field agent. Lawsuits proliferated like snails after a rain.

AMY CREHORE

Camfield had rented the film after hearing about OCAF's vendetta. What he saw was the story of a boy driven to fantasy in order to escape the horrors of Nazi Germany—one of which horrors, incidentally, was the invasion of homes by police to seize prohibited goods. The particular scene that incurred OCAF's wrath depicts the boy performing oral sex on a teenage girl. Mind you, it's more suggested than clearly shown—there are no genitalia visible—but the Lord's door kickers know smut when they see it, and even when they don't.

What they don't know is the Constitution, even when they are violating it. Oklahoma may outlaw as "obscene" any portrayal of a person under 18 having sex, but the Supreme Court says that if material can be judged to have artistic merit, it's not obscene. *The Tin Drum* has so much artistic merit you can barely sit through it. It's dreary, dismal, long and about as sexually titillating as a war crimes trial. You would deserve your money back if you rented it expecting porn. This movie does for cunnilingus what *Psycho* did for naked women in showers.

OCAF and the Oklahoma City police also flouted the 1988 Video Privacy Protection Act, a federal law that bars anyone from giving out or receiving individuals' video-rental records without their permission or a court order. But the laws of man, when they don't suit Bob's needs, are secular trifles. Bob says he and the Lord make the rules.

It's not enough for the righteous to control what comes into their own domiciles, they also must know what goes on next door. OCAF's ugly secret is that the children and families in Oklahomans for Children and Families aren't theirs but yours, and while you may claim to have your kids' best interests at heart, Bob Anderson suspects otherwise and knows better.

Fortunately, Bob and the Lord don't make law, or public policy, or any significant difference when it comes to the Internet, the video industry or human behavior. If the latest escapade of Anderson and his hallowed imaginary friend had any impact, it was unintended: The local library, which before the clamor had loaned out *The Tin Drum* maybe eight times in 12 years, had a ten-person waiting list after the story broke.

Our theory is that if the Lord were actually anywhere in Bob Anderson's vicinity, he would take the opportunity to knock some sense into the man.

FORUM

TIME OUT FOR JUSTICE

why talking about drugs is worse than murder

By JAMES BOVARD

Politicians in Washington are demanding a new crackdown on—and harsher penalties for—cocaine users, among other narcotics violators. Yet before the nation embarks on drug war number 327, we should stop and examine what our political ruling class has already achieved. The files of the November Coalition, Families Against Mandatory Minimums and various media accounts are filled with horror stories. It is worthwhile to compare sentences that are given to drug offenders with those received by murderers, rapists, child molesters, armed robbers and other victims of difficult childhoods.

Jose Tapia, along with a friend, carried out "the largest mass murder in Rhode Island history," according to Providence prosecutors in 1996. Tapia and his buddy intentionally set fire to the home of a family of Guatemalan immigrants. Six people (including four children) died in the flames. (Typically, the criminals were both evil and stupid: Tapia and his friend were trying to torch someone else's home but got confused.) Tapia received a sentence that will make him eligible for parole in 21 years. By contrast, Kyle Lindquist, a 36-year-old excavating contractor and father of three, was busted in 1992 on conspiracy charges of intent to possess and distribute 1000 kilos or more of marijuana. Lindquist got a sentence of 23 years with no possibility of parole. Apparently, conspiring to hustle some weed is worse than burning down a house full of children.

Rodney Kelley murdered two brothers in 1991 near a New Orleans freeway overpass, shooting each in the head and robbing the corpses. The police caught Kelley but then prosecutors allowed him to plead guilty to manslaughter, which meant an eight-year sentence—and eligibility for parole after only four years. By contrast, Will Foster, a 38-year-old software programmer and father of three, grew marijuana in his basement to treat his severe rheumatoid arthritis. Based on a bogus tip from a supposed "confidential informant" that Foster was selling methamphetamine, police raided his home. While no methamphetamine was found, police did find about 70 marijuana plants, many of which were seedlings. Because Foster was a first-time offender, the judge let him off with a 93-year sentence.

William Edward Neusteter used a handgun to rob a 7-Eleven and several of its customers in Denver in 1995. District judge R. Michael Mullins sentenced Neusteter, the son of a prominent local businessman, to five years' probation. Similarly, a Los Angeles County sheriff's deputy who went berserk and began shooting at kids who were spray-painting graffiti, and who engaged in a high-speed chase and then lied about the circumstances, was convicted of "assault with a firearm, gross negligent discharge of a firearm, shooting from a vehicle and filing a false report." Sheriff's Deputy Bobby Rodriguez could have faced 14 years in prison, but he received five years' probation. By contrast, Amy Marie Kacsor and many other luckless individuals have had five years added to their federal prison sentences merely because firearms were found in their homes by police searching for illicit substances. Kacsor, a 26-year-old Michigan resident, was busted for growing marijuana in her basement. The police searched her house and found two registered handguns owned by her mother, as well as two hunting rifles owned by Kacsor's boyfriend. Federal judge Stewart Newblatt denounced the additional sentencing as vicious.

> One first-time marijuana offender got 93 years.

In July 1995 Anthony Brown and his brother beat and raped a woman in Atlanta within days of Anthony's release from prison on armed robbery charges. Brown pleaded guilty to rape and received a one-year prison sentence. Under the state mandatory sentencing law, he should have received life in prison as a repeat violent offender, but prosecutors decided to be nice. His brother, who also pleaded guilty, was required to submit to five years of "intensive" probation. By contrast, Todd Davidson, a 27-year-old Deadhead, was originally sentenced to 20 years in prison for conspiracy to possess LSD with intent to distribute. A friend with whom he shared a motel room sold some acid to federal agents. Davidson was caught in the same net, and he was found guilty partly on the basis of a remark made prior to the sale.

Daniel Green received a six-year sentence after using an ax to smash the skull of a 17-year-old boy and almost killing him (the victim was in a coma for three months and suffered permanent brain damage). North Carolina prison officials were beneficent and set Green free after he had served just a third of his sentence. Two months after he was paroled, Green and Larry Demery murdered Michael Jordan's father, James, and stole his Lexus. By contrast, Christopher Sia was initially sentenced to 24 years in federal prison after he was set up by an undercover federal agent. Sia's sentence was determined by a peculiar guideline that bases LSD penalties on the weight of the drug and its "carrier medium"—in this case blotter paper and a liquid solvent. Despite a modification in the sentencing guidelines, LSD offenders continue to receive disproportionately severe sentences.

Edwin "Fast Eddie" McBirney received a five-year sentence for fraudulent practices (such as using federally insured deposits to pay for sex parties) that wrecked his Texas savings and loan and cost U.S. taxpayers an estimated $70 million. McBirney served slightly more than half of his sentence. By contrast, Kelly Hackett, a 29-year-old Ohio resident, got a five-year sentence after a "friend" (who turned out to be a government informant) brought an undercover agent to her house. They wanted to buy some crack. Hackett called an acquaintance, who sold them 5.4 grams of crack. Four months later, Hackett was arrested. Thousands of Americans are serving five years in federal prison (with no parole) after being apprehended in possession of

less than two pennies' weight of crack—a mere five grams. Thanks to propagandists of the drug war, crack holds a special place on the political demonology honor roll of the late 20th century. First offenders who have never even been caught jaywalking automatically receive five years in prison, thereby making reelection campaigns safe for incumbent congressmen.

Elmer Tate of Warwick, Rhode Island admitted guilt in three separate child-molestation cases, in 1992, 1994 and 1996. Yet each time, local judges awarded him a suspended sentence. Apparently, the molesting of children may or may not deserve punishment, depending on the whims of judges and prosecutors. By contrast, the mere hearing of certain words is a hanging offense. Loren Pogue, a middle-aged real estate agent, got snared in 1990 because he agreed to help a friend sell a plot of Costa Rican land. Because the buyers—undercover agents—mentioned that they intended to use the mountainside as a landing strip for Colombian cocaine flights, Pogue was convicted of conspiracy to import, possess and distribute cocaine. Regardless of the absurdity of the scheme, the fact that the word cocaine was mentioned at the closing of the real estate deal earned Pogue 27 years.

The Reverend Richard Rossi Jr., pastor of the First Love Church in Pittsburgh, was charged with attempted murder after his wife identified him as the attacker who beat her nearly to death while they were house-hunting in a Pittsburgh suburb. In 1995 Rossi was permitted to plead no contest to second-degree aggravated assault and served 96 days in jail. Upon his release he announced he was writing two screenplays. By contrast, Donald Clark, a farmer in Manatee County, Florida, was caught with 900 marijuana plants by state officials in the mid-Eighties. After serving time in a Florida state prison, he assumed his debt to society was paid. But in 1988 federal prosecutors decided to pursue conspiracy charges against Clark. As the *St. Petersburg Times* noted, "Since he was charged under federal racketeering laws, he was considered responsible for every seedling ever grown in Manatee County during the Eighties. That added up to a million plants." He received life without the chance of parole.

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The average murderer serves eight years in prison. According to Julie Stewart of Families Against Mandatory Minimums, many people have been sentenced to ten years or longer merely for "conspiracy" via indiscreet discussions with federal informants—"dry cases," in which no illicit drugs are directly linked to the defendant. With our current moral-judicial system, talking about drugs disapproved of by politicians is a worse crime than killing citizens. In one five-year period beginning in 1986 the average prison sentence for drug offenses nearly tripled (from 27 months to 78 months). The number of people in federal and state prisons on drug charges has increased tenfold since 1980; since 1987, drug defendants have accounted for nearly three quarters of all new federal prisoners.

BUCK BROWN

Under federal sentencing guidelines, a person is entitled to the same five-year prison ticket for possession of five grams of crack that he would receive for embezzling between $10 million and $20 million from a bank—or for using a threat of violence to extort between $2.5 million and $5 million from someone, or for kidnapping someone and seriously injuring the victim. Obviously, crack is terrible stuff.

Politicians seek to portray drug users and dealers as incurably heinous, yet they ignore the fact that three quarters of people sentenced to state prisons on drug charges have no history of criminal violence. Last year, the number of people sentenced to prison for drug crimes significantly exceeded the number of people sentenced for violent crimes. At a time when most big cities have a record number of unsolved murders on the books, more than 19,000 state and local law enforcement officials are assigned to the drug war on a full-time basis.

Florida State University economists Bruce Benson and David Rasmussen looked at the situation and concluded that cracking down on drugs unintentionally fosters theft, burglary and other property crimes because law enforcement resources are diverted. Their study notes that between 1982 and 1987, when Florida police focused on drug-law enforcement, drug arrests rose 90 percent, while total arrests rose only 32 percent. Property crimes escalated, with robbery rates rising 34 percent and auto thefts by 65 percent. As more resources are allocated to fight drug crime, the chance of arrest for property crime falls.

Politicians receive billions of dollars from citizens each year to fund the criminal justice system and provide police protection. But more than 5 million Americans were victims of violent crime last year. The only explanation for lawmakers' obsession with penalizing drug offenders while neglecting public safety is that they are far more anxious to control us than to protect us. As always, the lesson of political history is the same: Save us from our saviors.

READER

PUBLIC OFFERINGS

Sam Jemielity's "Whipping It Out" (*The Playboy Forum*, September) strikes a familiar chord. I subscribe to PLAYBOY and have never thought twice about reading my copy in public. Of course, this has engaged me in some interesting conversation. I'm heterosexual, but if the guy sitting next to me on the flight from Phoenix to Chicago wants to imagine differently, so be it. I also look at the pictorials (and have even been honored with posing for PLAYBOY's newsstand specials). As I politely pointed out to the middle-aged born-again woman seated next to me on another flight, there actually are articles to read. Is the public surprised that I read PLAYBOY? Sure. But all it takes is a quick thumbing through to see that PLAYBOY is much more than naked women. But you already knew that.

Holly Allders
Tucson, Arizona

I have read PLAYBOY in the park and at work in the break room. I have also read it in school. I don't carry it around positioned so that everyone can see the cover because I don't want to infringe on others' rights. There are reasons PLAYBOY is mailed in a black plastic wrapper: to keep it in good condition as it goes through the postal system and to not offend those who object to it. Unlike Jemielity, I guess I'm a little too shy to whip it out in a mall or restaurant. Ninety percent of the time I read it at home.

Jai Jeffers
Maryville, Tennessee

I thoroughly enjoyed reading "Whipping It Out." As a woman, not only can I not read PLAYBOY in public, but I have to hide it in my own apartment when I have male guests over. I've been accused of being a lesbian because I have subscribed to your magazine for years. I've had two boyfriends who could not understand why I would read PLAYBOY when they had no interest in reading it themselves. Or so they told me. It is frustrating not to be able to take the magazine out in public. I don't find the pictorials disturbing. Every woman featured considers it an honor. Many times I've started an article or fiction piece in the morning with breakfast and wanted to finish reading it on the train to work, but because that's taboo, I have to wait until I get home 13 hours later. I suggest you do a survey to find out what sort of woman reads PLAYBOY. At the top of the list would be one who enjoys being a woman and appreciates good writing.

Marsha Brandsdorfer
San Mateo, California

It seems PLAYBOY is still something you keep to yourself. I like to read it, but it can be uncomfortable to browse through it in public. In a bookstore, you get how-can-you-look-at-that-filth? looks from older folks and you-have-balls-for-reading-that-here looks from younger ones. Buying it is hard too. I took out a subscription to get around that, but when I want a special newsstand issue I have no choice. Usually the lady behind the counter has an I-know-you're-going-home-to-play-with-yourself smirk on her face. Even though PLAYBOY has come a long way and is more accepted than either *Penthouse* or *Hustler*, it still has that "dirty magazine" cloud hanging overhead. Regardless, PLAYBOY will continue to be my choice for entertainment.

Eric Patrick
Syracuse, New York

I would never whip out a PLAYBOY on a bus, in the subway or in a doctor's waiting room. Why? Because it carries the stigma of being dirty. Strangely, the barbershop is immune to this unwritten ban. You can read a PLAYBOY at a barbershop, but not at a hair salon.

Alacrity Fitzhugh
Toronto, Ontario

When I was negotiating the lease on my bookstore, I noticed a clause that forbade the selling of pornography. I asked if this included PLAYBOY and was told that PLAYBOY wasn't pornography. Then again, this is New York City. And yes, your magazine does get shoplifted.

Alan Zimmerman
New York, New York

I am a heterosexual mother and wife who enjoys your magazine. The last time I checked, the Constitution still stated that we have certain inalienable rights. Anyone of legal age has the right to read anything, regardless of his or her surroundings. No one thinks twice when a man reads *GQ* on a bus, where someone might notice the Calvin Klein underwear ad on the back cover. No one questions the cover line on *Cosmopolitan* that reads "Ten Ways to Reach Orgasm." I plan to put my next issue of PLAYBOY in my briefcase so I

FOR THE RECORD

ANTHROPOLOGY 101

"One evening at a hotel in New York I flipped around the television channels. Suddenly there on the public access channel was a voluptuous young woman, naked, her body oiled, writhing on the floor while fondling herself intimately. Meanwhile, a man's voice and a print on the screen informed the viewer of the telephone number and limousine service that would acquaint him with young women of similar charms and proclivities. I watched for some time—riveted by the sociological significance of it all."

—EXCERPT FROM THE BOOK *Slouching Towards Gomorrah*, BY ROBERT BORK, ONETIME NOMINEE FOR SUPREME COURT JUSTICE WHOSE CANDIDACY, DERAILED BY THE SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE, PROMPTED USE OF A NEW VERB ON CAPITOL HILL

RESPONSE

can catch up on my reading during the bus ride to work.

Lynda Cramer
Plano, Texas

I'm not ashamed to read your magazine in public, but I don't—for the same reason I don't read *National Geographic* in public. Both magazines are too large to fit into my pocket, and since I don't want them worn, dirtied, lost, ripped or ripped off, I leave them at home. Neither magazine is hidden, and they cause no problems—except when my teenage grandson visits. He must be interested in geography because he spends a lot of time in the room where they're displayed.

Richard McCleary
Phoenix, Arizona

The old cliché "I read it for the articles" is laughed off by those who have never partaken, but PLAYBOY's editorial content is some of the best in print. I would trade any amount of embarrassment for the simple joy of being informed.

Mitch Shatto
Fairview Heights, Illinois

JUNK OR BUNK

The authors of "Junk Science" (*The Playboy Forum*, September) challenge the purported connection between prayer and lower crime rates by asking if crime among Catholics educated in parochial schools has increased over the past decade. Even if crime has risen among Catholics, that fact does not disprove the lack of a connection. What one would have to examine is whether the crime rate among Catholics rose slower than the crime rate of non-Catholic groups. Since crime overall has skyrocketed, we should assume Catholics also commit more crimes. But if that rate of increase is less than the rate for other groups, a simple positive correlation between prayer and less crime could be established. While I concur that the "science" of Pat Robertson is lacking, the idea that prayer alters one's behavior is not so far-fetched and deserves to be researched. Thanks for the idea.

Douglas Modde
Iowa City, Iowa

The authors of "Junk Science" seem to think that the religious right forces kids to pray in school. What about allowing kids to at least have a choice? I don't believe anyone should be forced to accept values of any kind. In a country that prides itself on freedom, all controversial topics should be presented in an equal light from both sides. I agree that the crime rate is not necessarily connected to school prayer, but so what? The issue should not be prayer but freedom and choice.

Scott Klein
Costa Mesa, California

Wendy Kaminer and James R. Petersen suggest in "Junk Science" that religious faith is the engine of pseudoscience. In their zeal to degrade certain religious leaders, they have insulted the intelligence of everyone with basic skills in reasoning and judgment. The rise of crime in the Sixties compared with the abolishment of state-sponsored prayer is not, as Kaminer and Petersen put it, an example of coincidence versus causation. Rather, it's an example of association versus causation. Unrelated events often can occur sequentially. In order to deem circumstances coincidence, as opposed to a result of association, there must be no logical connections. I would confidently venture to say that religious teachings of nonviolence, as well as teachings of logical thought, are directly associated with lower violent crime statistics.

Seeking the answers to a society's problems is a unique and admirable trait of humans. The fact that the majority of us are ordinary people, and not scientists, leads me to believe that most of us resort to solving problems through association. We often have no choice but to examine the circumstances in reverse—from the problem itself down to the causes. The insinuation that religious faith drives the pseudoscience that common folks use to attach causes to problems is an invalid assumption. An individual's religious beliefs, or lack thereof, do not necessarily dictate one's ability to comprehend compelling evidence.

Finally, the original intent behind the "separation of church and state" was to prevent the establishment of

THE FAB FIVE

In a survey commissioned by the Freedom Forum's Newseum earlier this year, 29 percent of Americans couldn't name any of the five rights protected by the First Amendment. Most of those surveyed could cite freedom of speech (64 percent). But few people could remember that they are able to read unrestricted literature thanks to the right to a free press (15 percent) or to attend the church of their choosing—or none at all—because of freedom of religion (16 percent). A few (11 percent) recalled the right to assembly. And what is that last one? Right of petition. No one got that. Sorry, James Madison. In a separate survey by the *Chicago Tribune*, about 25 percent of Americans didn't want people in favor of or opposed to abortion marching down their streets. About half didn't want Nazis, skinheads or militia groups demonstrating in their communities. More than half wanted to gag Howard Stern, contending that sexual expressions shouldn't be allowed on the air. Almost half the survey group wanted restrictions on the Internet. Twenty-seven percent thought the First Amendment goes too far in guaranteeing rights. Don't you have to know your rights before you can object to them?

—NATALIE BORTOLI

state- or government-run churches such as the Church of England or the Church of New York. It's beyond logic how this ever became related to the Supreme Court's abolishment of prayer in schools, or to the numerous infringement claims by the ACLU for the sake of removing religious symbols from state property.

Michael Sweeney
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, Oklahoma

SMOKE SIGNALS

Editor's note: The legalization of marijuana is an issue that provokes heated responses from both sides of the debate. Our most recent article on the subject ("Smoke Screen," "The Playboy Forum," June) and the resulting mail ("Puff and Stuff," "Reader Response," September) persuaded us to pick up where we left off.

The *Journal of the American Medical Association* recently reported that people who do not use illegal drugs but live in households where such drugs are used are 11 times more likely to be killed than those living in drug-free homes. The study suggests that the link between violence and drug use may result from "drug-seeking activities, such as interaction with drug dealers and theft to obtain resources for drug purchase."

The link between violence and illegal drug use can be summed up in one word: prohibition. The true cause of drug-related violence is the necessity of dealing with a criminal element to obtain a supply. Nearly every scientific study on the subject has shown that prohibiting a substance is far more harmful than using that substance. Let's take a good look at our current drug policies and see how they affect drug users and those who live with them. We'll find it's time for a change that will end the violence. That change will be an end to prohibition.

Mark Greer
Media Awareness Project, Inc.
Porterville, California

Dr. Eric Voth makes many assertions against the use of marijuana for medical purposes. However, Dr. Voth (who I assume is a medical professional relying on medical research) fails to cite a single scientific study to support his stance on the drug's effects or side effects. Voth asserts that pot, like tobacco, is addictive. His proof? "Ask chronic users of marijuana to cite the longest time they have been off the drug, and the answer is usually only days or weeks out of years of use." I have seen numerous chronic users stop smoking pot for long periods (over a month at a time) in order to pass a privacy-invading drug test. George Carlin has admitted to taking the occasional hit, but says he can put the drug away for months at a time. In his words: "Pot will leave you alone like that; most drugs won't." Carlin, with his well-publicized past use, is more experienced in the varying effects of different illicit drugs than Voth or anyone else who has studied, but never used, them.

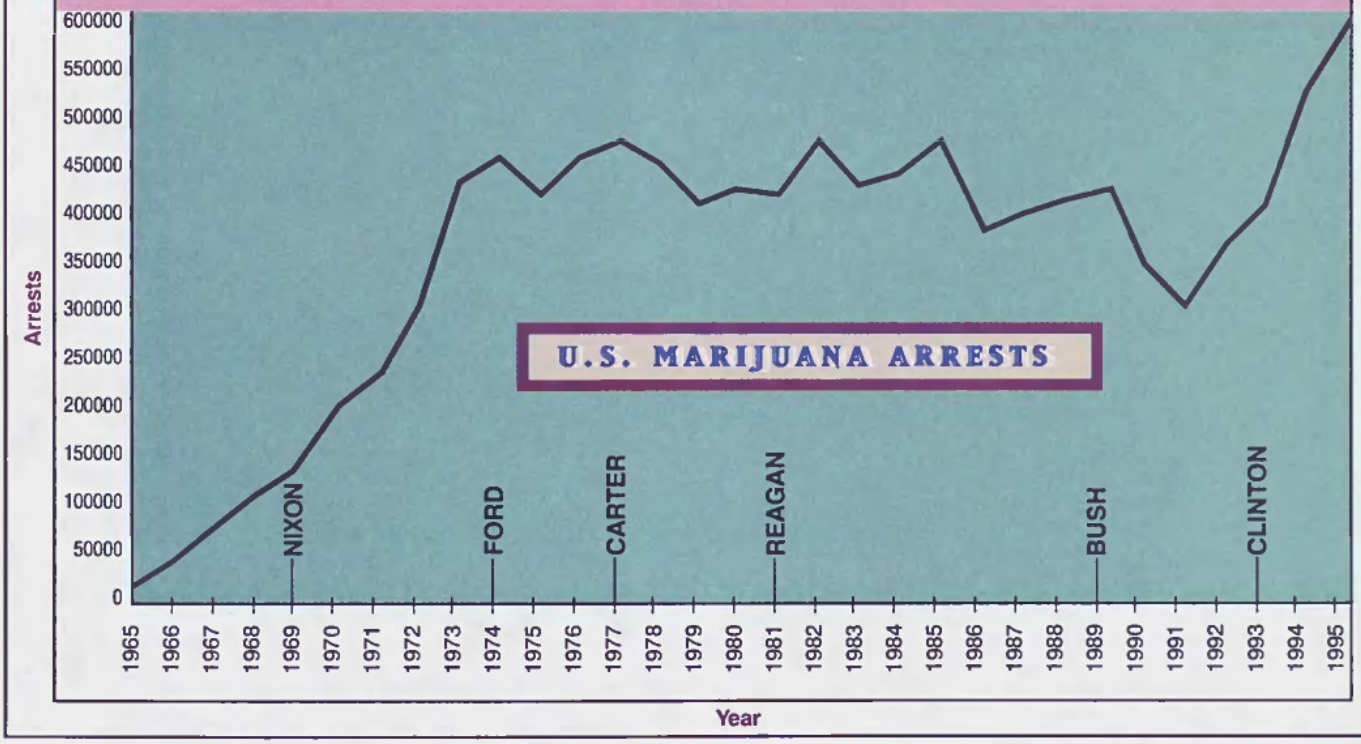
Voth has obviously bought into the government propaganda when, in fact, he would do better to look open-mindedly at the facts that exist and attempt to gather information where none exists. He suggests reformulating the prescription drug Marinol into a suppository. This is particularly fitting, since those who want to suppress the use of marijuana as medicine have been blowing smoke up our asses for years.

Derek Taylor
Crested Butte, Colorado

We would like to hear your point of view. Send questions, opinions and quirky stuff to: The Playboy Forum Reader Response, PLAYBOY, *680 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60611. Please include a daytime phone number. Fax number: 312-951-2939. E-mail: forum@playboy.com (please include your city and state).*

FORUM F.Y.I.

To mark the 60th anniversary of the Marijuana Tax Act of 1937, the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws drafted a report on the state of prohibition. NORML asserts that, with the arrest of a marijuana smoker every 54 seconds, the Clinton administration's war on drugs is more intense than that of any other presidency. Here's how previous commanders in chief measured up:



COVENANT MARRIAGE

tightening the ties that bind

By DANIEL RADOSH

When Gina and I were married this past summer, we wrote our own vows. In them we promised our love and encouragement, our honesty and trust, our respect and good humor. These seemed to us the elements that make for a strong, rich union.

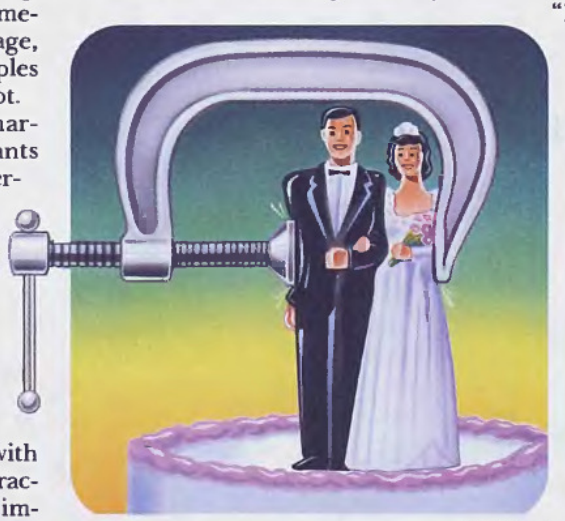
The state of Louisiana thinks otherwise. Shortly before my wedding (in New York, thankfully), the Louisiana legislature passed a law delineating what it believes to be the foundation for an ideal marriage. In that state from now on, my marriage—and yours and that of every other hitched person you know—will be considered an ordinary, grade-B matrimony, regardless of our tear-jerking vows. The Real Thing—the super-premium luxury model—is something called a covenant marriage, a new type of nuptials that couples may choose when tying the knot.

What makes a covenant marriage so special? Do participants promise to love, honor and cherish more than the rest of us slobs? Of course not. A covenant marriage is defined not by what goes into it but by how difficult it is to get out of. Couples choosing the covenant option give up their right to an immediate divorce, entering into a contract that can be terminated only with proof of certain traditional infractions: adultery, abandonment, imprisonment or physical abuse.

The law, in other words, is the latest tactic in the religious right's effort to flip the calendar back to 1956—the good old days when divorce was far less prevalent and couples who hated each other preferred to scream and break dishes every night for the sake of the children. While attempts to repeal no-fault divorce laws have been shot down in several states, the Louisiana approach was approved overwhelmingly, making it an instant model for future campaigns around the country.

But not a model for my marriage. I had too many questions about the details of this new law, mainly the proclamation that a covenant marriage can be dissolved "only when there has been a complete and total breach of the marital covenant commitment." I mean, who's to say that what the state considers a complete and total breach is inherently worse than any number of other offenses?

I called the law's author, Louisiana state representative Tony Perkins. He explained that the law's definition of breach is based on "what was historically the law back when there was weight to the marriage contract." Personally, I don't feel that my marriage contract lacks weight, and I don't suspect Perkins, married 11 years with the option of no-fault divorce, feels that way about his. Nevertheless, under Louisiana's new law, couples who are already married can upgrade to a covenant marriage at any time.



DAN CLYNE

Perkins and his wife plan to go through counseling and upgrade in February as part of Louisiana's Covenant Marriage Week. No doubt this will soon be a must for politicians.

I told Perkins I could understand if covenant marriage had no option for divorce, but that as long as there are some escape clauses, it begged the question, why those and not others? For instance, physical or sexual abuse of a spouse or child at one time wasn't considered grounds for divorce, but it is now, so Perkins isn't totally antiprogress. I wanted to present him with a hypothetical marital difficulty that would directly stimulate his family-values brain. What if, I asked, a husband announced that he was gay?

"Um. Well. Again, there is no. . . ." Then he saw the loophole: "Obviously if he is gay and engaging in the homosexual lifestyle and engaged in sex with others, that would be adultery."

How about if the husband was going to leather bars and dancing with men but not getting laid? "That is not a breach of contract," Perkins admitted. "It would be as if a husband went out dancing with other women."

I threw out a few more scenarios: a wife gets an abortion behind her husband's back; a wife burns an American flag; a wife burns an American flag in front of the children; a husband announces that the family must begin worshiping Satan.

Suddenly, Perkins was displaying considerably less pride of authorship. "If they agreed to a contract that limits the grounds by which they can terminate the marriage," he sputtered, "that's between them. It has nothing to do with me or anyone else."

Clearly the solution is for couples to hammer out their own covenants, so I sat down with Gina to figure out what ours would be. We quickly agreed that adultery, abandonment and abuse are all valid grounds for divorce, but I said we could ditch the imprisonment clause. (I've always had a bit of a women-in-prison thing.)

As for other divorceable transgressions, Gina cited using a cellular phone in a public place. She loathes creeps who walk down crowded streets yammering away on their phones. She made me vow that if I ever discovered a cure for the kind of brain cancer that people supposedly get from cell phones, I would keep it to myself.

Fair enough. It was my turn. I had heard from a number of barflies that married life meant, above all else, the end of blow jobs. So what I wanted out of our relationship upgrade was for my bride to vow that she would not abandon, imprison or abuse me by not providing oral sex on demand, any time, anyplace.

She paused. "Let me consult my lawyer," she said.

Unfortunately, this covenant marriage thing clearly wasn't going to work out.

NEWSFRONT

what's happening in the sexual and social arenas

PENNIES FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

MCKINNEY, TEXAS—*If you have an idea that could make millions for your employer but won't reveal it, can your boss lay claim to your thoughts? Evan Brown says he*

knows a way to update old computer codes that could be worth millions of dollars, but that he has never written it down. DSC Communications sued for ownership of the idea because Brown signed an employment contract ten years ago giving it rights to all his "made or conceived" inventions. After the software engineer refused to share his inspiration, the company fired him and took its case to court. A state judge ruled that Brown must explain his idea before ownership can be determined, and that DSC should compensate him $45 an hour for his time.

BAD RISKS

DALLAS—*First the Church overlooked it. Then it said it was the parents' fault. Now it wants someone else to pick up the tab. A jury ruled that the Roman Catholic diocese committed "gross negligence" by not taking action sooner against a priest who sexually abused at least 11 boys over ten years and awarded the families $119.6 million in damages. In response to the judgment, a former diocese official said the parents were more responsible than the Church because they should have known their kids were being abused. Finally, the diocese filed its own suit against two insurance companies that refuse to pay the jury award. According to "National Underwriter" magazine, many insurers now decline to cover churches for sexual-misconduct judgments and others have lowered the limits on what they will pay.*

RIPPLE EFFECT

CINCINNATI—*Prosecutors in Hamilton County say they know who killed an 18-year-old driver in a traffic accident, and that it wasn't the obvious suspect—the rookie cop who ran a stop sign during a chase and collided with the teen's car. Instead, they charged the man who was being chased with the felony of involuntary manslaughter. "If your action proximately causes the death of another, you can be guilty of involuntary manslaughter," an assistant prosecutor argued. (He cited an earlier Ohio case in which an elderly woman died of a heart attack after catching a burglar in the act. The burgler was convicted of causing her death.) County officials declined to prosecute the police officer, who had his siren blaring as he joined the chase, but the city fired him and charged him with a misdemeanor.*

FREE FOR ALL

SACRAMENTO—*State officials have created a searchable CD-ROM that lists the names of California's 63,920 registered sex offenders and includes descriptive information and mug shots. To discourage vigilantism, adults who wish to view it must fill out an application. Meanwhile, a group of self-styled crime fighters are copying the names, birth dates and crimes of repeat offenders and posting them on a Web site (sexoffenders.net). Officials in Alaska, Florida and Indiana already post the names, addresses and photos of registered offenders online.*

HIV UPOATE

LONDON—*Researchers report that men who have HIV and an untreated sexually transmitted disease such as gonorrhea may be more likely to pass on HIV to their partners. Writing in "The Lancet," the scientists say HIV apparently preys on immune system cells sent in by the body to battle the second STD. In their study, conducted in Malawi, the researchers found that the amount of HIV in semen was eight times greater in participants with urethritis (an infection often caused by gonorrhea). The good news: Treating the STD with antibiotics reduced the level of HIV in the semen.*

SEXUAL PERSECUTION

HELENA, MONTANA—*The state supreme court threw out Montana's antigay law against "deviate sexual relations," saying it violates a fundamental right to privacy. No one was ever charged under the law, enacted in 1973. Five states—Arkansas, Kansas, Maryland, Missouri and Oklahoma—criminalize gay sex, and 15 others have laws banning sodomy among gays and straights alike. In one of those states, Georgia, the law may face a challenge with the case of a man convicted of having consensual oral sex with a 17-year-old girl. Forty men and one woman are already imprisoned in the state on sodomy charges. A prison system spokesman says the woman's conviction was related to prostitution, but that none of the others involved consensual acts.*

PAYMENT DUE

PRESTONSBURG, KENTUCKY—*A former school board member took his case to small-claims court to collect on a sex loan. In a handwritten complaint, Wood Keesee, 59, said an ex-girlfriend had agreed to repay*

an $1800 loan with 18 sex sessions at a rate of three or four a week. She defaulted after three sessions, Keesee wrote, so "she owes me 15 sessions or $1500." The woman denied the charge, and Keesee later dropped the suit.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY KEVIN POPE

A '67 MUSTANG

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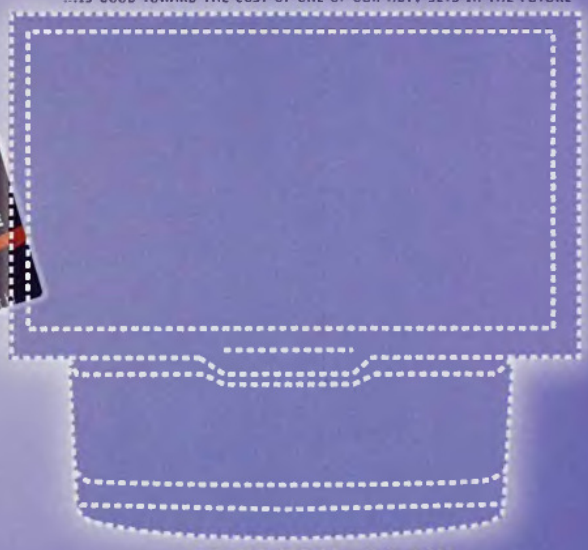

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CUTTING EDGE PLEDGE

WE THOUGHT OF EVERYTHING

PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: ROBERT DOWNEY JR.

a candid conversation with the precocious, scandal-plagued actor about his hippie boyhood, his descent into drugs, his escapes from rehab and his resurgent career

When Robert Downey Jr. discusses his well-publicized reputation as a heroin and coke addict, he often talks about how, despite the media circus swirling around him, he processed thoughts through what he calls a lizard brain—a mind that compartmentalized his life into 45-minute increments. Each increment followed the same pattern: Race out of the house, get drugs, get high and be back in the house within 45 minutes.

It's hard to keep a straight face when Downey explains this because he actually has a lizard perched atop his head. It's a bearded dragon, a reptile belonging to his four-year-old son, Indio. The lizard cost $80, not including the veterinary fees incurred when it went into seizures earlier in the day. The lizard was meant to keep Indio busy while dad shot a co-starring role in "U.S. Marshals," the spin-off of "The Fugitive."

Indio couldn't care less that his father is being interviewed. Though his father has been called the best young actor in this country by director Robert Altman and others, Indio wants nothing more of his father than playtime. It obviously gnaws at Downey to have to put off his son, and so the compromise is that while Downey answers questions about an illustrious career that almost came undone by his addiction to hard drugs, he does it as Indio places the lizard on top of his head.

The son of Robert Downey, the underground filmmaker who directed "Putney Swope," Robert Downey Jr. entered the movie business when he was not much older than Indio. He was born on April 4, 1965 in New York City and made his screen debut at the age of five as a puppy in his father's film "Pound." He did another turn, with his actress mom, Elsie, in the Downey-directed "Greaser's Palace."

It's no surprise that, as a student at Santa Monica High School, he quit school and headed to New York to become an actor. While waiting for his big break, Downey Jr. sold shoes and bused tables, even served as "living art" at the downtown club Area.

In 1982 he entered a happy, successful phase that included dating aspiring actress Sarah Jessica Parker. He also got jobs playing punks in movies such as "America," "Firstborn" and "Baby It's You," and he starred in the 1985 telepic "Mussolini: The Untold Story," as the dictator's son, Bruno. But it was a supporting role in "Weird Science" that gave him his big break. He became buddies with fellow cast member Anthony Michael Hall, the geek in the John Hughes teen-angst film "Sixteen Candles." When Hall joined the cast of "Saturday Night Live" in 1985, Downey went with him. Spotted on "SNL" by director James Toback, Downey got his first starring role, the title character in "The Pick-Up Artist." Then came "Less Than Zero," from the Bret Easton Ellis novel, with Downey's portrayal of the spiraling downfall of nice guy–drug addict Julian Wells. It put him into the top echelon of young actors, and Downey took full advantage, making several movies each year, including "Chances Are," "True Believer," "Air America," "Only You," "Soapdish" and "Short Cuts."

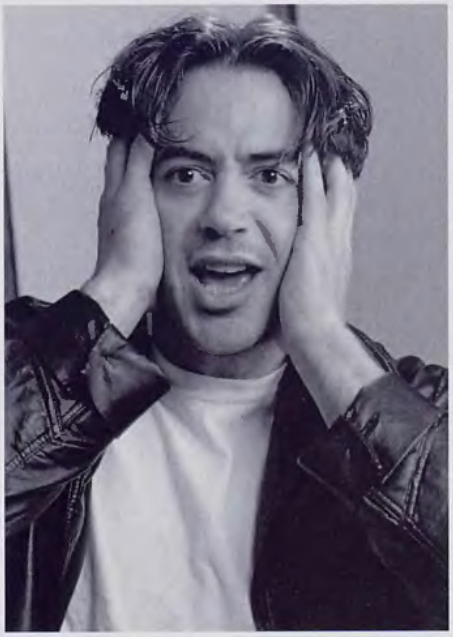
Downey beat out such highly bankable competitors as Robin Williams and Billy Crystal to star in "Chaplin," the biopic directed by Richard Attenborough for which Downey received an Oscar nomination.

Meanwhile, Downey's penchant for partying was becoming problematic. Growing up in a bohemian family, Downey had smoked pot with his dad by his early teens and had also used cocaine. When he starred in "Less Than Zero," his castmates feared there wasn't much difference between the performance and the performer.

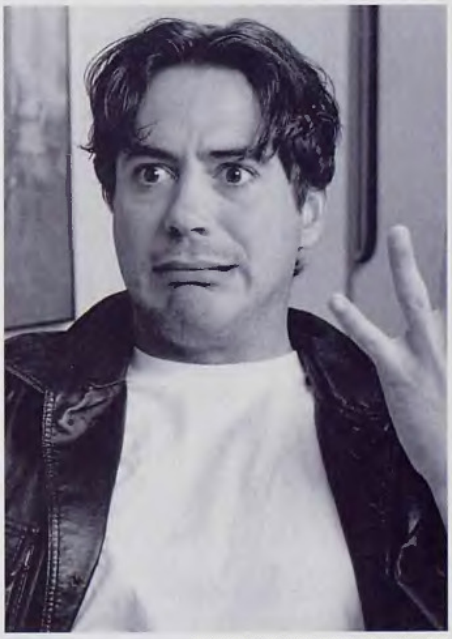
While Downey's acting seemed effortless, even inspired, in such films as "Heart and Souls," "Natural Born Killers," "Home for the Holidays," "Restoration" and "Richard III," his drug problems worsened. His self-destructive behavior had earlier taken a toll on his relationship with Parker.

Subsequently he met and married singer Deborah Falconer, and they had Indio. But

"There's nothing quite as disconcerting as hearing Sean Penn yell at you through a door about what his intentions were for you that evening. He's not to be taken lightly when he's upset. And he was upset."



"What's the fucking point of crashing, burning and rising like a phoenix out of your own ashes into the same exact fucking thing you were before, sans drugs and alcohol? What's the value in that?"



PHOTOGRAPHY BY GEORGE GEORGIOU

"Believe me, if ever someone found the transition to boy king an easy one, it was me. I was way into clothes, way into toys. I almost went bankrupt last year. I was extravagant, with no moderation."

on June 23, 1996, Downey was pulled over for speeding and was found to be carrying cocaine, heroin and an unloaded .357 Magnum in the cab of his truck. By that time Falconer had moved out with Indio and less than a month later, in what became known as the "Goldilocks" incident, Downey surprised a Malibu family on July 16 by passing out in their child's bed. He had to be revived and was sent by Malibu municipal court judge Lawrence Mira to the Exodus Recovery Center in Marina del Rey, the same facility Kurt Cobain visited before committing suicide.

Downey escaped from the facility for four hours on July 20, then found himself handcuffed before the same judge, who made it clear that the party was ending. Mira jailed Downey for ten days in a 24-hour lockdown facility and gave him three years' probation, with the threat of jail again if he slipped up—even once.

It was the remedy Downey needed. So far he has remained sober, and he has his family back. Strong performances in the Toback-directed "Two Girls and a Guy," the Mike Figgis–directed "One Night Stand" and the Altman-directed "The Gingerbread Man" have helped restore Downey's reputation in Hollywood.

To see how Downey is rebuilding his life, PLAYBOY *sent* **Michael Fleming,** *a columnist for "Daily Variety," to speak with him in Chicago, where he was filming "U.S. Marshals." Fleming reports:*

"We had agreed to meet on what was supposed to be his day off. It had rained the previous day, forcing a change in the shooting schedule. So when we met that evening, Downey had not only worked a full day in an unair-conditioned airplane hangar in 100-degree heat, he had also absorbed a punch in the ribs from Wesley Snipes, the film's villain, that was serious enough to require X rays. Despite this, Downey could not have been more gracious. In three interview sessions over the next 24 hours, he was as engaging and charming as he appears on-screen. He didn't duck a single question, and this was by far the most candid, in-depth interview he has given about those dark days.

"Downey now spends his days with two constant companions. There's Joe Bilella, a producer of 'Richie Rich' and Downey's partner in a production company called Herd of Turtles. The other is Earl Hightower, a court-appointed drug counselor who helps Downey stay straight. Both were there at the three-floor house Downey rented during the Chicago shoot, along with his son and Downey's mother, who came for a visit while Downey's wife, Deborah, stayed in Los Angeles to work on her music career.

"Downey is not particularly ashamed of or apologetic about the events that transpired last year. Indeed, he cringes more at the memory of a bad film. He covered the most difficult subjects without a hint of bitterness, defensiveness or denial; in fact, he often seemed so eager to tell his story that he would interrupt or change subjects in midthought. He says he's rediscovered the things that are important in his life—his son, his wife, his directing aspirations and his own plans for a music career."

PLAYBOY: In your new film *One Night Stand*, you play someone who's dying of AIDS. Director Mike Figgis based the character on a close friend. He trusted you with the role, even though you were having problems at the time.

DOWNEY: Mike was so loving to me, because I was out of my mind when I met him.

PLAYBOY: What do you mean?

DOWNEY: We were at Kate Mantilini's restaurant in Los Angeles. I was shoeless. Is there a statute of limitations for a concealed weapon?

PLAYBOY: We'll have to find out.

DOWNEY: OK. I had a concealed weapon. At the bar. He was looking at me and I'll never forget the look on his face. I was thinking, What? Is he aware of what's going on? He asked me, "Why do you have a gun?" It was, like, sticking out of this little purse. I mean I was completely in a fantasy. I wasn't a badass. I thought I was meeting with Figgis for the handsome male lead, because I was so debonair. In fact, he was interested in me for the role of the guy dying of AIDS. He gave me the job.

I could go from watching TV in a hotel room to being back in 45 minutes with drugs. And I could do it in any major city.

PLAYBOY: Do you think he made that decision on the spot?

DOWNEY: Yes.

PLAYBOY: Figgis directed Nicolas Cage to an Oscar in *Leaving Las Vegas*. Cage played a guy with a fatal addiction to alcohol. There you were, with your own addiction. Did you tell Figgis about your problem?

DOWNEY: It was apparent. But this is interesting. He related to me like someone who was completely in control of his own reality, and was deserving of respect. There was no condescension because of what I was going through. I don't discount the fact that addiction or alcoholism is a disease. But I still feel that, at every turn, I was choosing to keep going with it. It was serving some part of me, either deeply spiritual or darker, I don't know.

PLAYBOY: Do you mean that it helped you creatively, the way people have said Richard Pryor was funnier when he was on the edge?

DOWNEY: Yeah.

PLAYBOY: Did being high help your work, or is that an illusion?

DOWNEY: Well, it's all an illusion. But my beliefs, my expectations have changed. When I first got turned on to hard drugs as a teenager, I could snort coke and drink all night and still function. As soon as I started smoking heroin instead of smoking coke, everything was different, and I knew it was. And it happened around the time I was doing *Home for the Holidays*.

PLAYBOY: How did that affect your performance?

DOWNEY: *Home for the Holidays* is, for me, one of the most relaxed performances in the history of cinema. I can't attribute that to the fact that I was at a serene place in my life, or that there was a real warm feeling on the set.

PLAYBOY: You can joke about it now.

DOWNEY: This is a problem for me because I glamorize this stuff. I can't say that it wasn't real dark, real evil and real hurtful to those around me. And yet, practically every take of that film was a print.

PLAYBOY: Your director, Jodie Foster, didn't let you off the hook just because you were doing good takes.

DOWNEY: God bless Jodie Foster. When does she have time to do a handwritten letter telling someone how she genuinely cares about them? She said, "Listen, I'm not worried about you on this film. You're not losing it or nodding out, and you're giving a great performance. I'm worried about your thinking you can get away with doing this on another film."

PLAYBOY: So it was made clear that you were courting trouble.

DOWNEY: Nonetheless, the experience was a ball. My body felt great. I wasn't hungry. There are certain, practical things that doing lots of heroin and cocaine takes care of. Like weight problems, or attention deficit disorder. I could actually be interested in what someone was saying, when I wouldn't have been interested sober.

PLAYBOY: *Home for the Holidays* was filmed mostly in Baltimore. Where did you get the drugs? Did you take them with you?

DOWNEY: I could go from watching Spectravision in a hotel room to being back there in about 45 minutes with drugs, and I could say that for any major city. It's like there's the drug-crazed divining rod, and it's your main focus. The purpose is so clear. The purpose is to procure substance. I called it my lizard brain.

PLAYBOY: Were you recognized?

DOWNEY: Yeah. That would usually be to my benefit.

PLAYBOY: Now that you're straight, you don't look back on *Home for the Holidays* and cringe, knowing what was going on inside you?

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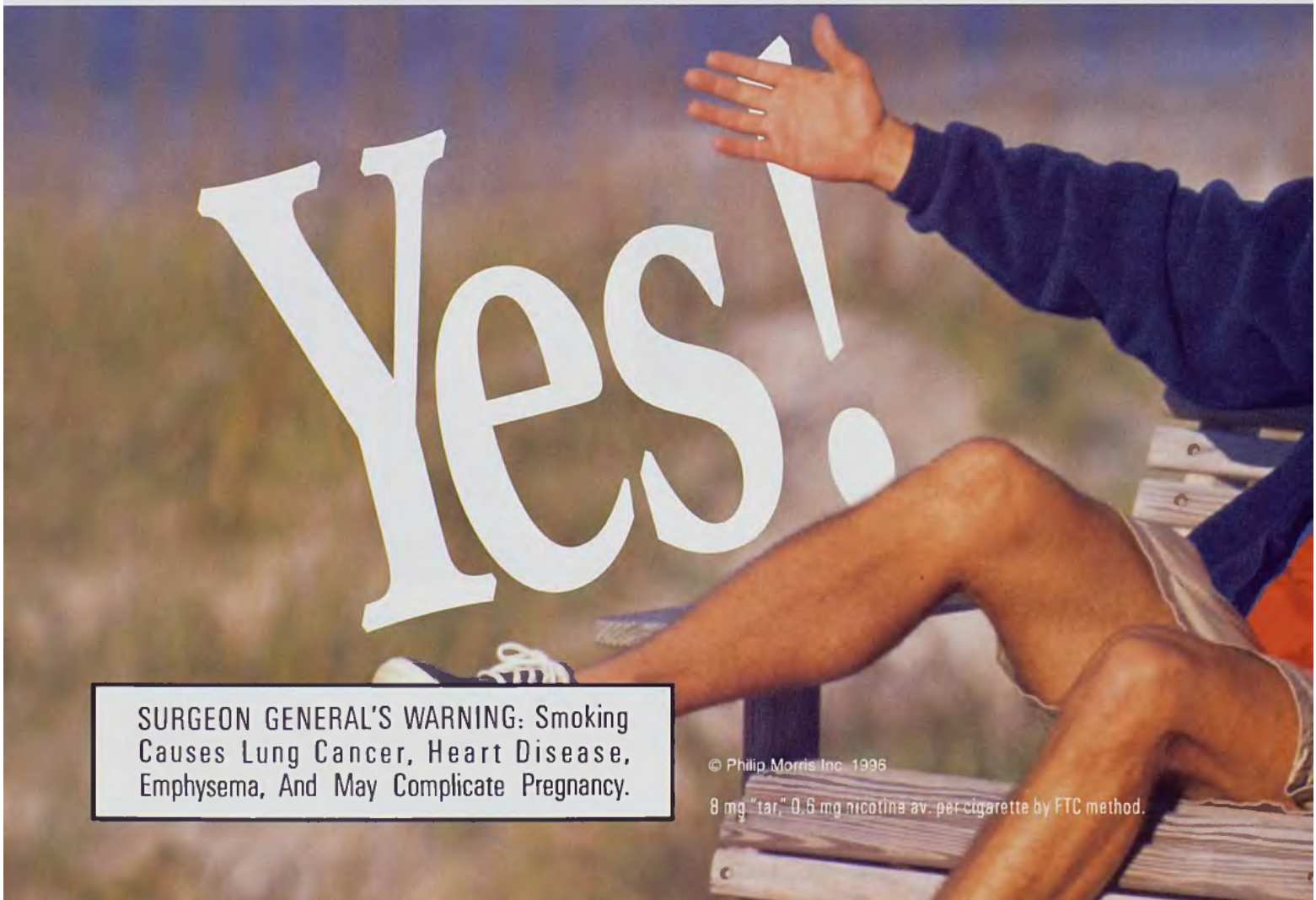
DOWNEY: I'm very proud of that film. It's the rest of the day I cringe about.
PLAYBOY: Was it a shock to realize you were in trouble?
DOWNEY: Mostly I'm surprised that it didn't happen sooner. I mean, it's like running red lights all the time and finally getting a ticket.
PLAYBOY: How did your peers react?
DOWNEY: I ran into Mel Gibson somewhere, and he said that he thought it was funny.
PLAYBOY: Funny?
DOWNEY: Yeah. It wasn't funny for me, but to read about the sequence of events, yeah, that's funny. And it's funny because nobody got hurt.
PLAYBOY: Do you worry that directors might be eyeing you to make sure you don't slip?
DOWNEY: If I were a director looking at me agitated, I might be suspicious. But there's plenty to do now, just being a dad and working.
PLAYBOY: You're working with people who know you well.
DOWNEY: The first thing I did after was *Two Girls and a Guy*, with James Toback, who's an old friend. He gave me my first lead and completely sympathizes with compulsive behavior. He and I were pretty much two peas in a pod. And then Altman was like, "Big fucking deal. You're over it. Let's do some good work." And now, I have the support of Wesley, who I was in *One Night Stand* with, and Tommy Lee Jones, who I did *Natural Born Killers* with. They have been very cool with me.
PLAYBOY: Did they lobby for you?
DOWNEY: I guess they did, yeah.
PLAYBOY: People can help you now, but their words didn't have much impact on your sobering up, did they?
DOWNEY: No. But it was grotesquely amusing to watch people attempt to fix me.
PLAYBOY: How many people tried?
DOWNEY: Several dozen.
PLAYBOY: Sean Penn's attempt seemed most dramatic. What did he do to try to help you?
DOWNEY: Oh God. Everything from secreting me to the desert to kick, to knocking down my door and putting me on a private jet to Tucson.
PLAYBOY: He knocked down your door?
DOWNEY: Or he and a couple of other guys did, yeah.
PLAYBOY: That's friendship.
DOWNEY: And there's nothing quite as disconcerting as hearing him yell at you through a door about what his intentions were for you that evening. I just remember waking up, or coming to, and saying, "How the hell did he get in here?" He's not to be taken lightly when he's upset. And he was upset.
PLAYBOY: Had he been a good friend of yours for long?
DOWNEY: In a relatively short time he was a better friend than some people I'd known for ages. I remember him saying three or four years ago, "You have two reputations. I think you know what both of them are, and I think you'd do well to get rid of one of those reputations. If you don't, it will get rid of the other one." And I was like, "Two reputations, I'll be right back." Just hearing him say that reminded me that I should go score. So I did and I was back in, of course, 45 minutes.
PLAYBOY: He broke down your door. Did you try to escape?
DOWNEY: Of course! And it's so weird when you're trying to break out of your own house.
PLAYBOY: Their efforts didn't help?
DOWNEY: It's that inertia of an addict. Next thing I know I'm on a private jet. Then it's three days later, and I'm at this treatment center I've been at before. Everyone's being really nice. The very next thought I had was to escape, to leave the clothes there, take a water bottle. Soon I was 50 miles into the desert, no ID, no cash.
PLAYBOY: You actually escaped?
DOWNEY: Yes. Miraculously, I hitched a ride for 27 miles into town, telling them something like, "I'm a married man. I had a room in town and I had"—I just started bullshitting up a storm—"I had a lady of the evening. I woke up and she'd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taken my credit cards. I've got to get back to my son's bar mitzvah." I called my accountant in New York, woke him up. Said, "I got to get on a plane now." Next thing I knew, I had a coach ticket. But because it was me, they bumped me up to first class. Drank the whole hour-and-a-half flight back.

PLAYBOY: Did you try to avoid Sean Penn afterward?

DOWNEY: You bet. After that, he was like, Forget it. It sucks, too, because someone as honorable as he is, I really should have responded. Jesus, I grew up idolizing this guy. Not only does he consider me a friend, but he's taking time. He's got a family. He's got a career that's going well. He's living his dreams and making time for me, and I'm like, "I can't, I just can't—sorry, busy."

PLAYBOY: Who else attempted to straighten you out?

DOWNEY: For a couple of months, I think it was the visitors' roster. Who's here to try to make an impact today? And I was always available. With few exceptions, I was always saying, "Great, let's try," because resignation is a real bad idea.

PLAYBOY: Once you got straight you became expensive to insure. You dropped out of a picture called *Wild Things* because the moneymen wanted you to pay a six-figure premium.

DOWNEY: It's all justifiable. I can't say I wouldn't be a high risk, and I'm not saying it wasn't cool of them to go out on a limb to get me, to want to have me do this film, considering my history. Here's the other thing: I don't need a fucking acting career. If I have one, it's great. If things pan out, it's great. If things crash, and I never do another movie again, I don't give a fuck.

PLAYBOY: Really?

DOWNEY: I don't give a shit. I love change. I write music. I can paint. I could, by virtue of my semicelebrity, go out and fucking do a million things, some of which might be a lot more gratifying than acting. I have a love-hate relationship with it because it's so fucking time consuming and usually disappointing. I don't fucking care what happens. I just care how I feel while it's happening.

PLAYBOY: The insurance hazards seem behind you now.

DOWNEY: Yeah, I'm a safer bet than people who are supposedly controlling a dope or drinking or sniffing or shooting problem. Some of them are working on films now anyway because they passed their physicals. I was much more of an insurance risk before I was an insurance risk.

PLAYBOY: You have a court-appointed drug counselor, Earl Hightower, who goes wherever you go. How long will that last? What's it like?

DOWNEY: Actually, it's been really liberating. We get along and we have a lot of laughs, but we also take care of business. I've never been in this situation, where if something is going on, someone says, "What's up? Let's talk about it." And I actually talk about it.

PLAYBOY: It must be a strong incentive to know that if you slip even once, you're going to go to jail.

DOWNEY: I don't think anything else would work for me. At this point, it's been a while, and it would pretty much take a psychological meltdown for me to forget the reality of what I've been through.

PLAYBOY: But you never really know for sure?

DOWNEY: No. I wouldn't put it past anybody who's been where I have.

PLAYBOY: Let's talk about your films. It seems no matter what you do, *Chaplin* will be how you're remembered professionally. How does that performance hold up for you?

DOWNEY: We were in Savannah doing *Gingerbread Man* and I saw it. I said, "Goddamn, this is really good."

PLAYBOY: Was *Chaplin* your best work?

DOWNEY: Yes, thanks to Attenborough. He's in a class by himself, and he taught me more than anyone else.

PLAYBOY: You got the role over some big names—Robin Williams and Billy Crystal, to name two.

DOWNEY: Right. But Billy Crystal as Charlie Chaplin? Physically, he can't do

it. Robin Williams, he's a genius, but how's he going to get down to 145 pounds?

PLAYBOY: Why do you think *Chaplin* wasn't a big hit?

DOWNEY: Because of the way Tristar marketed it? I don't know.

PLAYBOY: So it got lost?

DOWNEY: I think so. I also think the fact that it was a biopic worked against it.

PLAYBOY: You received an Oscar nomination, though.

DOWNEY: Hell, yes.

PLAYBOY: Did you expect to win?

DOWNEY: Yes. I totally deserved to win.

PLAYBOY: Did you keep a stone face when they had the camera on you as Al Pacino won for *Scent of a Woman*?

DOWNEY: Yes. The guy who had the camera on me as I smiled and got up and gave the ovation to Pacino said, "Now that was discipline."

PLAYBOY: Did that performance take preparation?

DOWNEY: I thought for a second I was going to win. Marisa Tomei had won, and I thought, It's the young people here. I'm sitting there, convinced this could be it. The voice-over in my head was just ridiculous. *It's all going my way. Not much longer now. Why is it the last category? Because it's the category. Richard Tyler designed this suit for me. I'm going to go up and show it off. I kind of look like Daniel Day-Lewis. He won. Last time. It's all coming together. It's all—it's—well, some people think it's not your turn. Well, he did get dicked twice before, and Pacino is major. But he can't. It's me. But that—no, he can't—it's me. It's not—it's—oh. . . .*

Then it's, "Hey, Robert, you want to go to the after-party?" Oh, yeah. Good. That was just fucked.

PLAYBOY: So it wasn't a glorious night.

DOWNEY: Nah. But it was great to be nominated. And I got shafted for *Less Than Zero*. I should have been nominated for *Home for the Holidays*. Maybe I'll be nominated for one of these other movies. I'd like to project that into the future right now.

PLAYBOY: After *Chaplin*, Attenborough said you were Tom Cruise and a character actor rolled into one, and that if you choose your roles right, the world will be your oyster.

DOWNEY: He was absolutely right. [*Laughs*]

PLAYBOY: Have you made the right choices, and have there been roles you should have taken?

DOWNEY: No. There's nothing I passed on—I can't even remember, but there were dozens of them—that I wish I had back. What Attenborough said is so true. I should have waited and not done anything until I found something really good. Something I had developed. Things would be real different right now. It's so weird to feel like I'm making some sort of comeback.

PLAYBOY: Especially when you really never stopped working.

DOWNEY: Yeah. And what [*hesitating*] really . . . just . . . squelches . . . my . . . very . . . nutsack is when people say, "Oh, we're glad you're working again." Then I turn my back and they whisper [*assumes a pained, hushed, dramatic voice*], "He's such a lost soul. He's struggling. He's lost——"

PLAYBOY: So you——

DOWNEY: I'm not done yet! "He's in a lot of pain, he's so sad, he can't be enjoying any of this, he's so sick. He's a sick young man! He needs help! He's got to stop. [*Loud again*] Hey, but the dailies were great!"

PLAYBOY: Were you always able to work while impaired?

DOWNEY: Sure. I was a teenager when I got to L.A. to do *Tuff Turf*. I was on the Universal lot. I went to Los Angeles and it was like all my dreams came true. And there were no repercussions. It was the Eighties. And I fit in real well. I'm like the last guy at the party. It's passé to be involved in the shit I was involved in last year. But I never stopped working. I was making tons of money. I was set up in a relationship with Sarah Jessica Parker, and it just seemed like I could do no wrong. It was never easy, partying the way that I did, which was as often as I could. But it was doable. And as long as it was doable, I wasn't going to stop. So

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I'm surprised it didn't happen sooner.

PLAYBOY: How are things different now?

DOWNEY: I just have to find balance now. I'm living like a fucking monk right now. And that's OK, it's my turn to be a monk. I remember always hearing about people who went home after work and dealt with their kids and watched the Discovery Channel and had a popsicle and went to bed at ten o'clock.

PLAYBOY: How long can you last doing that?

DOWNEY: I don't know. I guess the issue for me is to keep things dynamic, and I don't think that would have happened while doing what I was doing before everything fell apart.

PLAYBOY: Does that mean you need to do things differently?

DOWNEY: I burned out on it to the point where I really wanted to escape from Deb and all the supposed rewards. So what's going to be different if I have the same formula now? I would love to do something radical. I want to change my name to Elias, which is my real last name. I want to paint myself blue and present myself as a new architect of the 21st century. I want to make Prince look like a stockbroker and just do something so radical. What's the fucking point of crashing, burning and rising like a phoenix out of your own ashes into the same exact fucking thing you were before, sans drugs and alcohol? What's the value in that? Except that everyone's a little more comfortable, and maybe I am too. And if I play my cards right, maybe I can have that fucking horse ranch! Maybe I can have all the pieces fit. I really would like to play my cards right. I can have a fucking horse ranch too!

PLAYBOY: What you're saying is that you need to——

DOWNEY: You're trying to decipher three minutes of manic flight. That's not an easy feat for anyone.

PLAYBOY: We're trying. You need to plot a different course.

DOWNEY: I think so. I remember saying to my wife a couple of years ago, "Debby, we've got to get out of L.A. We've got to get out of the country. We've got to move to China."

PLAYBOY: China?

DOWNEY: Yes. I felt we had to do a total 180 degrees, from the culture and everything we'd been raised to value. If I had really been ballsy——

PLAYBOY: You would have done it?

DOWNEY: Yeah, and this interview would be taking place in the new Hong Kong.

PLAYBOY: Which actors do you like?

DOWNEY: I always say John Malkovich, Christopher Walken—and I've really been impressed by Peter O'Toole. I don't know why. I think territorially. Like, where do you bridge the gap between yourself and another actor? When I saw Chris O'Donnell's Robin, I thought, I couldn't have done that. I just don't know how I could play Robin effectively. [*Laughs*] And Jerry Maguire.

PLAYBOY: Could you have done that role?

DOWNEY: Yeah. I should have. I wanted to, yet I couldn't have. He was meant to do that.

PLAYBOY: Tom Cruise?

DOWNEY: He was hilarious. I can remember seeing Leonardo DiCaprio in *Basketball Diaries* and going, Well, hey, that kind of preppy thing. And yet this character was on dope, so that should have been my glove-fit role.

PLAYBOY: How do you choose your roles?

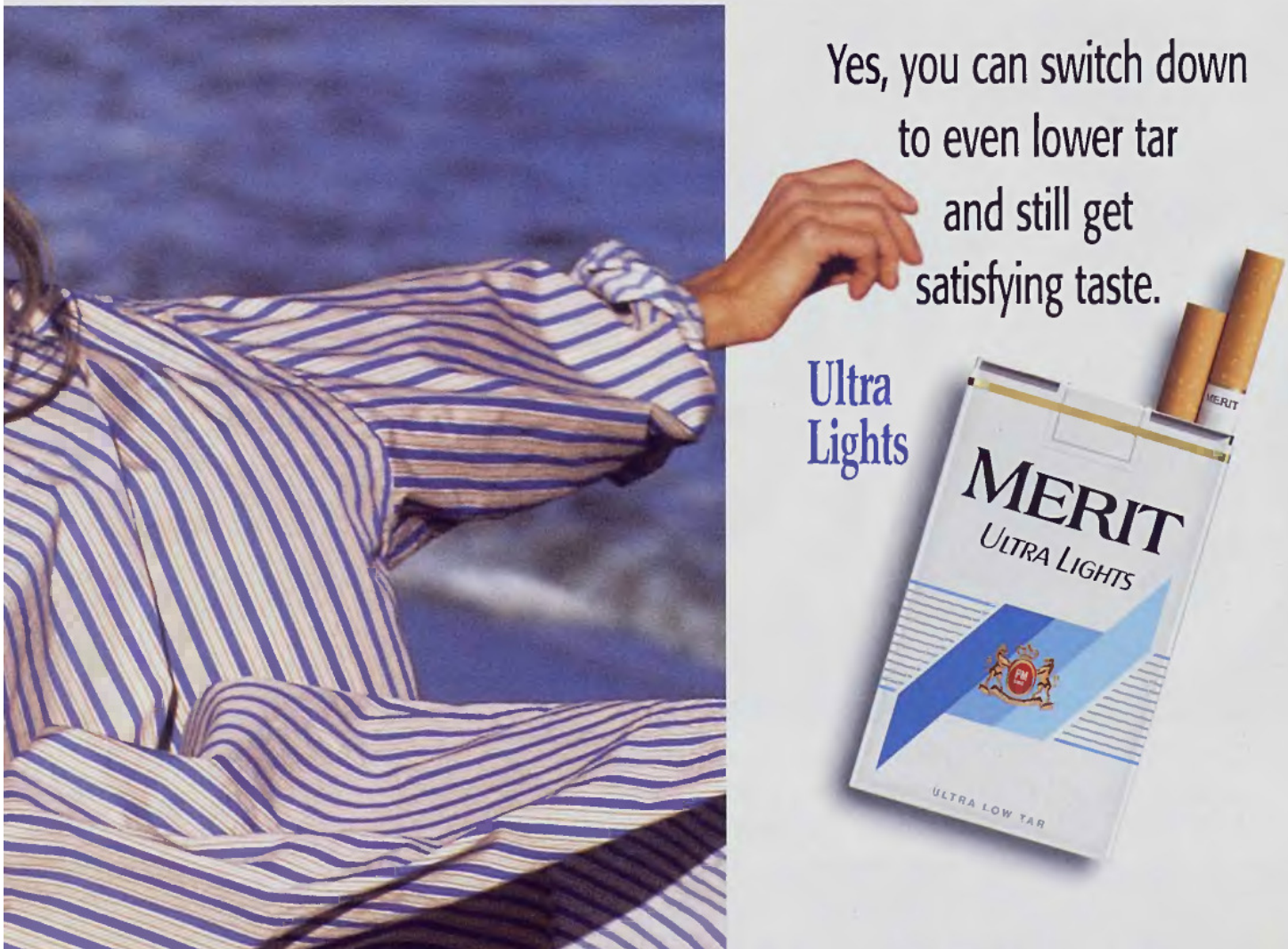
DOWNEY: I usually look at the cover page of something, I hear who's directing it, I hear who else is in it, and that's pretty much it.

PLAYBOY: You don't need to read the script?

DOWNEY: No. When Altman called me about *The Gingerbread Man*, I didn't read it before I said I'd do it. I knew Kenneth Branagh was in it. I loved him. Altman was directing it. There it is. [*Laughs*] Some say it's haphazard. I think it's haphazard if you're not being intuitive. Still, I am confounded by how you're supposed to do this, build yourself a long-lasting career.

PLAYBOY: How was it working with Altman again on *The Gingerbread Man*?

DOWNEY: It was great, so great. He would say things to me like, "Don't memorize



your lines or anything." "Don't look at the script tonight." "That was absolutely adequate, let's move on." Just funny stuff. And everyone was doing these Southern accents. Kenneth had one.

PLAYBOY: How was yours?

DOWNEY: Awesome. It was like in *Natural Born Killers*. Give me an accent, I've got a character. I don't have to do anything else. Put whatever clothes on me you want. If I'm worrying about the pants or the hair or the dialogue, I must (A) not have an accent or (B) not be in a good movie.

PLAYBOY: Let's talk about your childhood, growing up the son of an underground filmmaker. It doesn't sound like *Ozzie and Harriet*. Your first on-screen appearance at five was in *Pound*, in which you played a puppy asking another dog if it had hair on its genitals.

DOWNEY: The line was, "Got any hair on your balls?" It was with a bit of a lisp, too. A little accent I was doing.

PLAYBOY: How did you end up in your father's film?

DOWNEY: It was more convenient than having a kid whose mom might be there saying, "He's going to say what? You want him here till when?"

PLAYBOY: Did your parents think hiring you was easier than finding a sitter?

DOWNEY: Yeah. Then again, I wouldn't put it past myself to have been trying to work an angle to get a career at five.

PLAYBOY: Were you aware of what you were doing?

DOWNEY: It was all so organic to me because my dad was screening dailies on a sheet in our living room in the Village. Dad made movies, and we would watch the film he had shot that day. People came and made movies with my dad. Antonio Fargas and I made jokes until he had to go to the set to make a movie with my daddy. My mommy's doing a movie with Daddy.

PLAYBOY: So it was just part of your life. You came back at the age of seven with *Greaser's Palace*, and your throat was slit by God.

DOWNEY: Exactly. And my mom really got it from God. She got arrows, she got shot.

PLAYBOY: What did you read into that?

DOWNEY: That was when I recognized that there was someone in my family who worked in front of the camera, and her work had a deep effect on people who were watching. That was also when I realized that it was a discipline. You had to do it again and again. I didn't want to do it again. Dad took me behind the tree and gave me a little face slap and said, "You'll do it until we're done." That has stuck with me to this day.

PLAYBOY: You worked with him again recently.

DOWNEY: Yes, in *Hugo Pool*, which is another world unto itself. I play a Dutch film director who gets in trouble for shooting an extra, and I actually say in the film, "Dank God eet's Los Angeles. I'll probably get off with a leettle commoonity service." Which Dad loved. When I'm doing films with my dad, he knows all the characters I've been doing throughout the years. There are like 20 of them that will come up at any time.

PLAYBOY: When you were a kid, you smoked pot with your father.

DOWNEY: Yeah, to say the least.

PLAYBOY: Were you still having drug problems during the filming of *Hugo*?

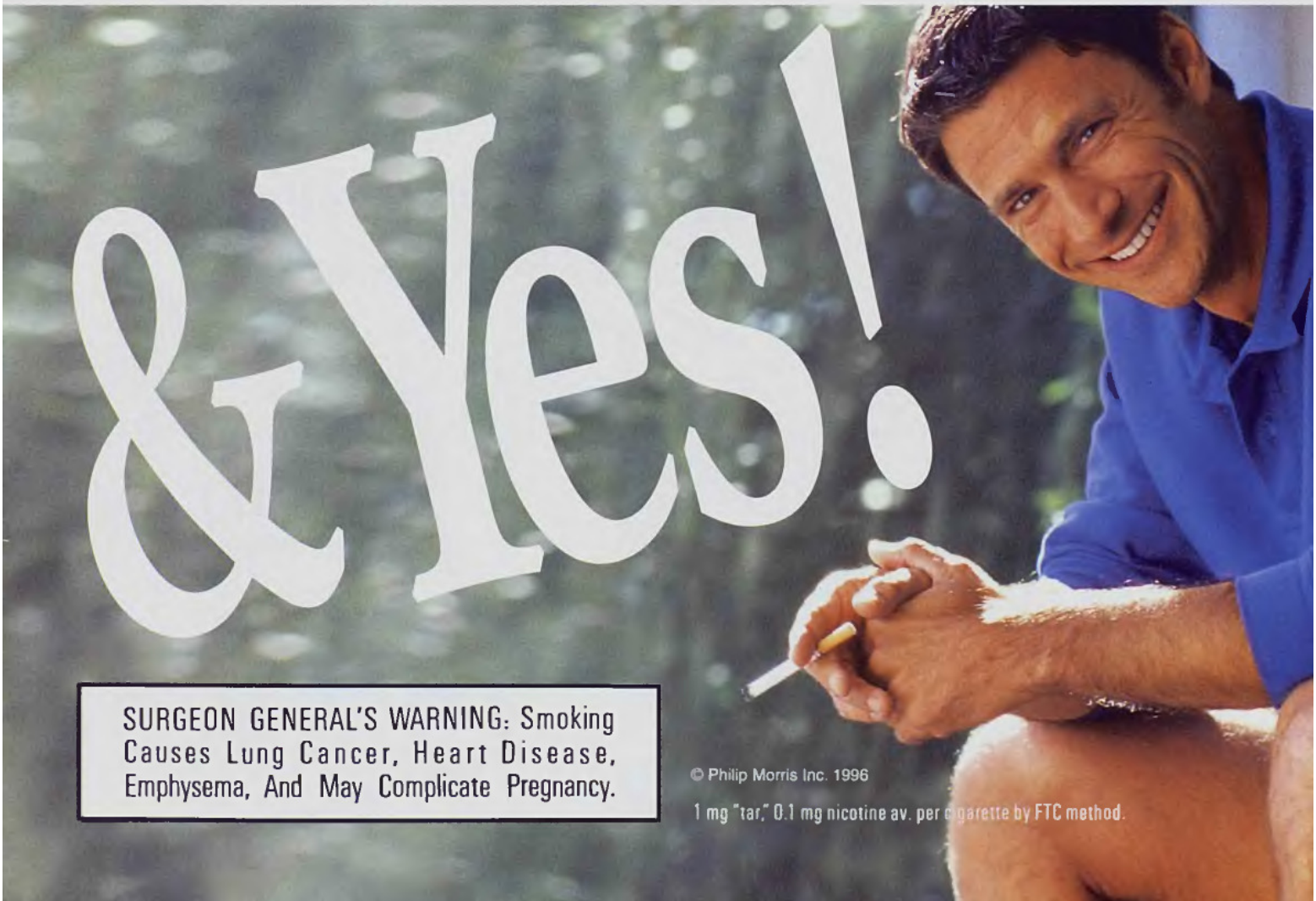
DOWNEY: Yes.

PLAYBOY: Your father introduced you to pot and then spent years overcoming his own coke problem. Was that shoot awkward?

DOWNEY: Well, it was really weird because my dad was directing it. My cousin was working on the film. It was ouchy and painful for them to see, but, again, my work didn't suffer from it. But that didn't mean it was OK. There was a lot of drive for me to seek help.

PLAYBOY: Now that you're a father, do you look back at your childhood with resentment?

DOWNEY: Though I feel resentment sometimes, I don't think I have any more reason to resent than someone in the 16th century who was leeched by his dad. I mean, it really was the times. I was in the generation that was smoking pot.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I lived in Woodstock, where it was like rainbows and pinball and pizza and pot.

PLAYBOY: Your home must have been quite a bit different from those of other kids in the neighborhood.

DOWNEY: I was not unlike urban latchkey kids. And also my dad was going around to colleges a lot. Back then there was something real earnest and avant-garde about it. I liked being my dad's kid. I liked the respect he got. I loved his sense of humor. I loved watching my mom make movies. And that's when I really got into it. When my mom kind of retired, I started, and I felt in a way that I carried that on.

PLAYBOY: Are there patterns you won't repeat with your son?

DOWNEY: Yeah, but I think that's a dangerous attitude to take, because then you're in denial. Some things I consider inexcusable about my parents' behavior I've already surpassed. There is so much fear in being a parent.

PLAYBOY: How did becoming a father change your views?

DOWNEY: It was the first time I recognized that there was something a lot more difficult than working. A lot more rewarding. Suddenly, your primary focus is outside yourself.

PLAYBOY: Was your son aware of your problems?

DOWNEY: No. I haven't dropped the ball as a dad very much.

PLAYBOY: Do you usually take your son on the road with you?

DOWNEY: So far, he's come to visit every time. My wife is back in California. She's a singer and songwriter, and she's starting to play a bunch and things are taking off for her.

PLAYBOY: Has your son become more important than your job?

DOWNEY: Yes, and it's weird, too. It's so much more important to me what Indio's watching on TV in the trailer than what I'm doing on the set. I find myself obsessing about things like his dental hygiene.

PLAYBOY: You went to Santa Monica High with a lot of kids who had acting aspirations. Did you hang out with Rob Lowe or the Estevez clan?

DOWNEY: I hung out with Ramon Estevez, the middle one of the three brothers. He taught me how to tap-dance, taught me about the social intricacies of late-night coffee shops. He was the first true eccentric I ever met. That whole family was like the Hearsts to me. They lived in Malibu. They all drove nice cars. They had a tight family.

PLAYBOY: Did you act in any school productions?

DOWNEY: Yeah. I would show up in the morning and hang out with my friends, then ditch. Show up for theater arts, ditch. Come back to hook up after school.

PLAYBOY: Your grades must have been interesting.

DOWNEY: They were consistent. And there was this fence—that's where I learned to escape. It wasn't easy to get over this chain-link fence, which was 20 feet high, at least.

PLAYBOY: How did your parents react to your ditching?

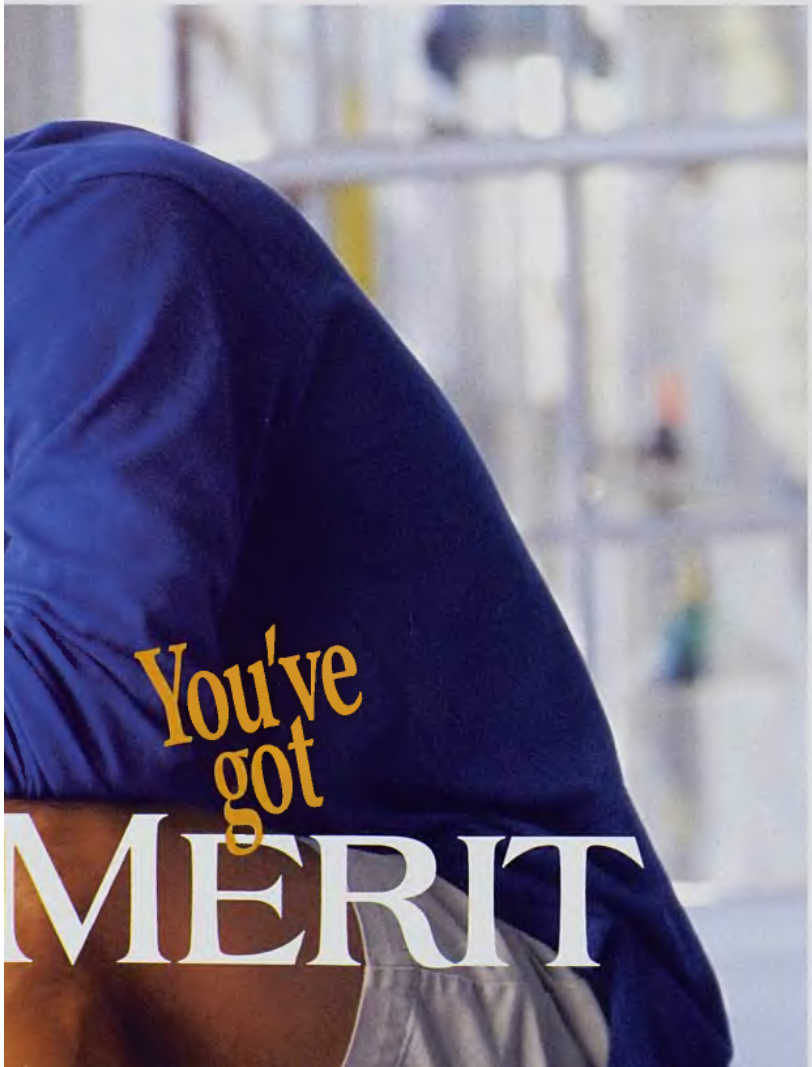
DOWNEY: My dad said I should either show up every day or quit and get a job. He was going back to New York to shoot a movie. I remember being called into a counselor's office, and she said, "Listen, we want to get you through this year. Eleventh grade was starting out well. You come in for summer school and we'll make up a bunch of these credits, and we'll get you into your senior year." I looked at her, thought of Dad's plan B, and I quit instead.

PLAYBOY: Do you regret not finishing?

DOWNEY: I take it upon myself to follow my interests, which include history, a love of nonfiction and science. But where was I going to go to college? What was I going to major in, tap dancing?

PLAYBOY: Describe those early days in New York.

DOWNEY: I was living with my sister in a really depressing apartment on Edgar Allan Poe Street, West 84th Street. Really depressing. I'd put on whatever clothes I had pilfered and I would go on these casting calls. I didn't have



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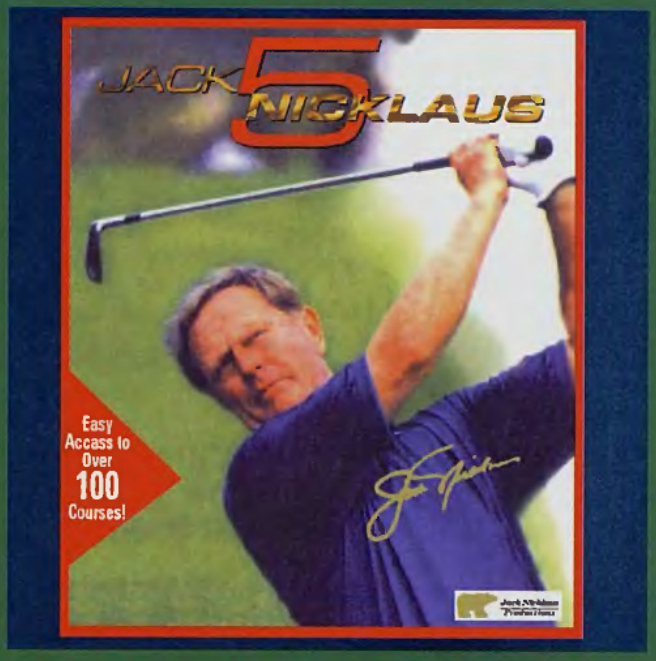

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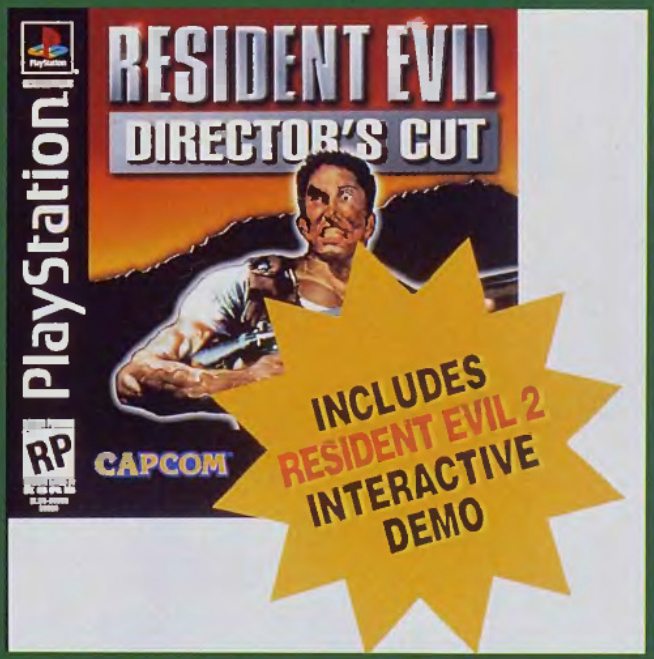

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an agent.

PLAYBOY: Did your family send you money?

DOWNEY: No way. The defining moment was when I called my dad. I said I needed some money. I really was hungry. I had ten cents. And he said no. He said, "Ask a friend." I said, "I don't have any friends." He said, "Ask your friends. Don't call me." I thought that was so cold. But I worked it out.

PLAYBOY: How long before you made it?

DOWNEY: It took three years. I was in New York, working in a restaurant as a busboy. I never made it to waiter because I was too sweaty and didn't have the finesse. Across the street from the restaurant was a theater. I got a part in a play. An agent saw the play, then I had an agent. I got a part in *Tuff Turf*. And then I auditioned for *Weird Science*.

PLAYBOY: That was a big break.

DOWNEY: I walked into John Hughes' office and Anthony Michael Hall was there playing with John's stereo system.

PLAYBOY: This happened right after *Sixteen Candles*?

DOWNEY: It was like running into Spencer Tracy or something. It was like seeing a movie star. [Anthony] Michael [Hall] came in and watched us read, and he kind of looked at me, like, I'm going to tell John to get you this job. I remember that Sarah was in the car outside waiting for me, and I said, "I think I got this job."

PLAYBOY: How did you meet her?

DOWNEY: We met on a film called *Firstborn*, which is, I think, the second movie part I ever got. I moved into her apartment shortly thereafter. We fell in love big time.

PLAYBOY: So you had both a career and a girlfriend. And you and Michael went on to become cast members on *Saturday Night Live*.

DOWNEY: Again, he helped me. This fellow probably had a greater influence on my career than anyone else. We became—and still are—good friends, and he had, at the age of 17, as much juice as anyone. Anyone I was excited to meet I met because he already knew them.

PLAYBOY: So it was his idea to do *SNL*?

DOWNEY: The idea had come to him, and we were always talking about wanting to do something. The show was re-forming, Lorne Michaels was coming back, and Michael got excited about it. He got me an audition for it.

PLAYBOY: It was not considered the greatest *SNL* season. How was it to be on at that time?

DOWNEY: It was wildly exciting. Our first host was Madonna. I was in John Belushi's dressing room. We demanded—or rather Michael did, because I wasn't in that position—bunk beds with NFL sheets. I was 20, so I'm barely making it there on Monday to meet the new host, you know.

PLAYBOY: So you were living up to the *SNL* partying tradition?

DOWNEY: Oh yeah. During that time, Michael was probably the most amazing pussy wizard in history. And if you were anywhere near him, you were having fun. He's 17 years old, and there are gorgeous girls everywhere.

PLAYBOY: You left to do *Back to School* with Rodney Dangerfield.

DOWNEY: That was fun. My hair. I was such a nerd, I thought the higher my hair, the more handsome I was.

PLAYBOY: Then you got *Less Than Zero*.

DOWNEY: Things were going well. Sarah and I had a place in L.A., and we had a place in New York. When I wasn't working, I was going to Red Square, going out to the clubs all the time. Andy McCarthy was cast as Clay, and I went to the audition. And I was Julian. I was smoking jackets, spats, ascots, gloves.

PLAYBOY: And you brought Julian to life.

DOWNEY: That's probably the first time I created a character from scratch. And it was really emotional. The first scene was on the tennis court, when Julian is confronted by his father. Everything changed from then on, because I knew if I got that right, the rest of the film was going to go well.

PLAYBOY: Some castmates, such as Jami Gertz, feared you were replicating Julian too convincingly.

DOWNEY: I didn't do it because of the movie. I did it because I'd been doing it for ages already. I started believing that as long as your performance was up to par, you wouldn't get too much flak on the shape you were in when you got there or when you left. That wasn't a good thing to cultivate.

PLAYBOY: Were you partying with your peers, or alone?

DOWNEY: If there were people there, great. If there was no one there, fine, as long as there was a bottle of Absolut, or a little something or other.

PLAYBOY: Was it mainly hard liquor then?

DOWNEY: Drinking, coke. Mushrooms were often involved.

PLAYBOY: Did it strain your relationship with Sarah?

DOWNEY: Not having that affliction herself, it was just confounding for her. But we had a love for each other that overcame all of that, and there was a surprisingly high percentage of normal days as well.

PLAYBOY: How did it end?

DOWNEY: One of the things I remember is that we were kind of broken up, but we weren't beyond reconciliation. Then I read in the paper that she's gallivanting with one of the Kennedy boys.

PLAYBOY: That was it?

DOWNEY: No, not at all. What could I not forgive after all I'd done? I just wasn't there enough of the time. We had real deep love for each other, and I worshiped her. When I could. I don't know that I would have had a career at all without her. She gave me something more than work.

PLAYBOY: Do you see her? Have you met her husband, Matthew Broderick, or is it too hard?

DOWNEY: It's not too hard. I ran into them somewhere, and I've never been uncomfortable seeing her with him. I love her and I always will, and I'm glad she found someone she's happy with.

PLAYBOY: After your seven-year relationship ended, you almost immediately married Deborah Falconer. What made her the woman you could commit to?

DOWNEY: It was really her personality, though it was of great benefit that she happens to be one of the most drop-dead gorgeous women I'd ever seen. There's something really youthful about her. She isn't self-conscious about how beautiful she is. And I could not get over her ass.

PLAYBOY: How long from curbside meeting to marriage?

DOWNEY: Forty-two days.

PLAYBOY: After seven years in a relationship with no ring, it took you only 42 days?

DOWNEY: Not to slight Sarah in the slightest. It seemed eventually Sarah and I would have married. But once certain words are said, or once you separate yourself geographically from a relationship, it's a whole different game. It's like pulling the one-armed bandit. And I came up gold bars a lot quicker than I ever expected.

PLAYBOY: How did Deborah react to your substance problem?

DOWNEY: She was as wild as I was. That was the last time I remember it being fun. We started off in high gear. I couldn't maintain the relationship, and then she got pregnant. That helped, but even that couldn't deter me from my primary purpose, until now.

PLAYBOY: There were reports she took Indio and left temporarily.

DOWNEY: That was in April.

PLAYBOY: And by June you were bottoming out.

DOWNEY: Also by June, I was hitting this stride that was very ethereal. I was out of body. I was getting toward the place I had always been looking for. See, some people like to go down and out with booze and dope, barely conscious, nothing working but the heart and lungs. But for me, there was the introduction of all these other drugs. I don't know if I was dying. I didn't know what was going to happen.

PLAYBOY: It sounds like a dangerous place.

DOWNEY: It was bad, and it was fuzzy, comfortable and familiar, and inviting. I was in a place that didn't have a lot of exits.

PLAYBOY: Then you were found in a child's bed in what became known as the "Goldilocks" incident. How did you end up there?

(continued on page 212)

WHAT SORT OF MAN READS PLAYBOY?

He's a man whose sense of adventure soars after dark. Last week he booked an entire restaurant for his girlfriend's birthday. This weekend he chartered a plane and flew some friends to Las Vegas. He had plenty of company. More than 2 million PLAYBOY men participate in casino gambling. Close to 3 million of our readers go to nightclubs on a regular basis. That's more than the readers of *GQ* and *Men's Health* combined. PLAYBOY—bet on it. (Source: Spring 1997 MRI.)

A Midnight clear

merry christmas in the bughouse, the snake pit, the glue factory. you can't say it isn't interesting

fiction by Thom Jones

For days Mrs. Gordon beseeched her stepson, Freddy, to drive her up to the state hospital in Granite Falls. Every Christmas she put together a fruit basket for her third cousin Eustace. His principal relatives had carried out the annual deliveries over the years, but winter had struck early in northern Illinois, and struck with a vengeance, dumping one record snowstorm after another. The storms were followed by fierce winds and two weeks of bitter cold. Christmas spirit notwithstanding, no one in the Gordon family wanted to venture outside, especially for a fruit basket mission to the mental hospital. So Mrs. Gordon worked on Freddy, who had been bragging recently about the virtues of his Swedish Saab, a car undaunted even by polar climes.

"If this car is as good as you say, 20 miles on a four-lane highway will be a cruise. Are you the right man for the job? Am I talking to the right fella?"

At last Freddy said, "The car is an ace. I'll do it."

Mrs. Gordon had never been to a state mental hospital. For her it conjured up images of gothic horror. In a small way, this was part of the visit's appeal. Also, reports of Eustace's recent stroke made his future seem pretty iffy. One more blood clot and he could be out. Mrs. Gordon knew she could not live with herself if she did not make a last-minute appeal for this poor soul's heavenly salvation. Because Freddy was a doctor, she figured he would know what to do if things got out of hand. As an emergency room physician, he wrangled with crazed drug addicts, autistics and demon-inspired assault-prone schizophrenics on a daily basis.

Freddy showed up at four in the afternoon, three hours late. Although he was dressed in a jacket and tie, he did not look presentable. The hair on the back of

ILLUSTRATION BY CHARLES BRAGG

his head had rooster-tailed and he needed a shave. His eyes looked like two balls of fire. In spite of being late, Freddy demanded caffeine. Mrs. Gordon wanted to kill him. Instead she convinced him to clean up while she made a pot of Starbucks. Freddy was blowing his nose when she barged into the bathroom with a plastic traveler's cup of coffee. "Let's get this show on the road," she said.

The sun sat low in the winter sky and they weren't even out of the driveway yet. Freddy complained that the coffee was too hot and got out of the car to break off a hunk of snow to cool it down. By now Mrs. Gordon was having second thoughts. She had spent most of the morning putting on makeup and getting dressed. Then she'd paced about the house like a madwoman, exhausting herself thinking of the barbarous scenes that might transpire at the hospital.

Freddy started the car and flipped on the soundtrack from the film *Crumb*. Concentrating on his coffee, he drove the Saab through the west side of town and then caught the highway to Granite Falls. *Crumb*'s syncopated ragtime rhythms were like theme music, by turns festive, exuberant and depressing. Except for roadwork vehicles and the intrepid Saab, very few cars were out. The road was ghostly.

Highway 31 ran parallel to the Fox River and when the Saab wasn't chugging through heavy snow, it faced winding curves slick with ice. Freddy braked for a van, the car spun and Mrs. Gordon slapped her hand against the dash. Freddy smiled. "You don't trust my driving skills."

"The road conditions are utterly *harrowing*, and you're driving one-handed. I got up at nine, I've been drinking coffee all day and I'm a nervous wreck," she said. "Absolutely shot."

Freddy laughed. "You said I look bad? You look worse. Haggard. A bag lady."

"I'm hagged," Mrs. Gordon said, letting out a sigh. She studied the old estates lining the river. Such scenes normally gave her pleasure, but now all she could think of was the upkeep and the heating bills. The owners would have to be millionaires, literally, with money to burn. She turned to Freddy and said, "What if someone attacks us? Crazy people have the strength of 30. They're like Samson. Even the little ones."

"That's why they lock them up," Freddy said. "Given enough time the mentally ill—an M.I.—will pull some crazy-ass shit. Most are tame, but murder and mayhem have a way of unfolding in their presence. We *could* be killed at the hands of some violent monster. More likely I'll roll the car and we'll drown in the river. I'm not Mario Andretti. I can't believe I agreed to do this in such shit weather, with a hangover yet."

"You're driving like a maniac!" Mrs. Gordon said. "I need . . . Dramamine or something. One more wild curve and I'll die. I can't take any more."

Freddy raised his voice over the music. "I can't take it either. I'm just trying to get this whole thing over with and get my ass back home and into bed. This was all your big idea. Eustace won't even remember us. He's not there, never was."

Mrs. Gordon bristled. "He's got an immortal soul," she said, "and this is Christmas."

Freddy shook his head with finality. "He won't be judged. He's defective."

"His dad took him to *whores*!" Mrs. Gordon said. "That's sin of the worst sort."

"What did you say?" Freddy cranked down the stereo. "He took him to a whorehouse? I thought they were big Christians."

Mrs. Gordon corrected her posture. Looking straight ahead she said, "When he came of age, Eustace sort of got out of control. His doctor had the name of some woman. It wasn't a whorehouse."

Freddy scratched the stubble on his neck. "Geez. I never figured that Eustace got laid. Just that he fell 95 feet off the water tower. Somehow I never imagined anything sexual happened with him."

"Once a week," Mrs. Gordon said, "something sexual happened."

Freddy turned off the stereo. "I have to fight to hear you. What did this woman look like?"

"She must have been a bird," Mrs. Gordon said. "To be able to put up with that. But, then, it was probably over quick——"

"And it calmed him? It did the trick?"

"As far as I know. But you just can't say he won't be judged."

The Saab hit a straightaway by the Campana factory and Freddy turned to his stepmother. "Eustace is an imbecile! You want to bring him to your house and take care of him in the true Christian spirit? Change diapers and stuff? No! I didn't think so. You think a fruit basket is going to help? The glue factory. That's where we're going. I'm not a Nazi. I'm just sayin'."

The Saab's radar detector began to blink as they approached the city limits of Granite Falls. The state hospital was situated on the east side of the highway, across from the river. It consisted of 22 Victorian-era buildings, only half of which were still operational. The hospital had been built on spacious grounds at a time when land and labor were cheap. It sat amid a grove of oak, elm and maple trees, their branches laden with dripping daggers of clear ice. Snow swirled in drifts over a deeper layer of packed snow, white, untrampled, except for animal tracks. Mrs. Gordon clapped on a pair of sunglasses and studied the frigid landscape. A formidable wrought iron fence, interspersed with brick pillars, surrounded the grounds. There was no chain-link or razor wire, but the fence was tall and artistically deceptive. It was there for security. Freddy wheeled through the main gate and parked in the visitors' lot. "Here we are at last, my dear, the bughouse. The snake pit. Vermin and reptiles abounding."

Mrs. Gordon's throat was dry. "I don't know if I can go through with it."

"Well, you simply must, dear heart. And let me say that this is yet another fine mess you've gotten us into!" Freddy grabbed the fruit basket from Mrs. Gordon's lap. "One more." As he opened the door, a bitter crosswind hit him like a slap in the face. He pulled up the collar on his overcoat and cursed himself for not wearing a hat. Mrs. Gordon put her head down against the wind and followed, vainly attempting to preserve her hairdo.

"Slow down," she said. "I'm wearing heels. I can't keep up with you."

"Flash frozen," Freddy said. "Antarctica. It's like liquid nitrogen."

A patient in a stocking cap and a Navy peacoat stopped Freddy to cadge a cigarette. Freddy shook off his gloves and pulled a pack of Kools from his pocket. He gave them to the man and said, "Keep them, buddy. I quit as of now. My New Year's resolution."

At this, a very short man wearing an overcoat and a dark homburg came around from the side of a beige Electra. His mustache was white with frost yet he seemed oblivious to the cold. The Buick had a flat and the two men were attempting to replace it with a mini spare. Now that he had been engaged, Freddy felt compelled to help them. He pulled on his gloves and replaced the lug nuts on the wheel. The man in the peacoat tightened them with the lug wrench while Mrs. Gordon held her ears and winced.

"Va-boom!" the short fellow said. His voice was deep and powerful. "Done. Ah-ho-yeah!" But as he let the jack down and the full weight of the car came to bear, the mini spare went flat. "Oh brother!" he said. "What's this country coming to? Why can't they give you a real tire for a spare? I *knew* this was going to happen. I'm calling a tow truck, Norman. This is intolerable!"

(continued on page 140)

"Grandpa? While the turkey's roasting, how 'bout a quickie?"

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHEN WAYDA

she lost her crown, but won control of her life

O, MISS CANADA

DANIELLE HOUSE knows how to take it on the chin. Growing up in Newfoundland, Danielle got bruised as a broomball goalie and banged up in backyard rock battles. But she always came back smiling. So it's no surprise to see that girlish grin even now, after her toughest test ever. "This has been a hell of a year," she says, her golden eyes gleaming. "But it made me a stronger person." Only two months after winning the Miss Canada International crown, Danielle was accused in October 1996 of hitting her ex-beau's girlfriend at a university bar in St. John's, where Danielle was studying nursing. And although she says her ex-boyfriend instigated the punch—"He grabbed my arm, I pulled back and she got struck"—she was convicted by a judge and stripped of her crown. But Danielle didn't get mad. She got an agent. Now, at the ripe age of 21, Danielle

Although headlines tagged her as the "brawling beauty," Danielle says, "I'm not a brute. I actually grew up a girly girl." Still, she is "flattered" that all the attention placed her in PLAYBOY. "People would say, 'Watch, you'll end up in PLAYBOY wearing a tiara, boxing gloves and nothing else.'"

THE OTTAWA SUN

Miss Canada beats up rival in bar brawl

Brawling beauty breaks down

"I'm extremely self-conscious about my body," says Donielle. "Sometimes, when I look at other women, I think that I don't really measure up." As if, Danielle! We think you're a knockout.

HAIR BY MATEO FOR CRISTOPHE SALON, BEVERLY HILLS
MAKEUP BY ALEXIS VOGEL
STYLING BY JENNIFER TUTOR

is chasing her modeling and acting dreams in the U.S. Yet she will not let fame tarnish her northern values. Of part Inuit heritage—do *not* call her Eskimo—she firmly believes in stretching her resources. "You're not going to see me on a shopping spree on Rodeo Drive," Danielle proclaims. "I pride myself on bargain hunting. I love a good flea market." She's also shopping for a new man. And it will not cost him a fortune, either. "If you want to impress me," she says, "give me a Franklin Mint doll and sit me down for a *Star Trek* marathon with a cheesecake by my side." But don't expect Danielle to stay away from controversy for long. In tribute to her trapper culture, she wants to be the spokesmodel for the Canadian Fur Association. "It's my heritage and I'm proud of it," Danielle declares. And she's ready to take on the animal rights activists. "After all I've been through," she says, grinning, "I can survive anything." —JEFFREY A. SCHNAUFER

VERSACE'S PARADISE

in a world of pleasure, murder can be the most powerful memory

article by

PAT JORDAN

The Normandy Plaza Hotel has the sad pretension of a faded beauty whose best days are only a memory. It lies at the wrong end of Miami Beach, at Collins Avenue and 69th Street. The chic art deco hotels are a few miles south, on South Beach. The Normandy is garishly made up with a hot-pink exterior, purple trim and green awnings.

The lobby of the Normandy, with its peeling linoleum floor, is barren except for two soda machines, a deserted metal bar that hasn't served a martini or manhattan in decades and a few black-and-white photographs of Marilyn Monroe on the walls. Monroe once stayed at the Normandy. So did Clark Gable and Carole Lombard. The Normandy's most recent guest of note was Andrew Cunanan. He checked into the hotel on May 12 and left on July 14, the day before he murdered Gianni Versace.

"He was so well mannered," says Miriam Hernandez, the hotel manager. "He had a beautiful smile, and beautiful teeth."

Teeth are something Miriam would notice at the Normandy Plaza, whose guests tend to be missing teeth. Miriam herself is a soft-spoken Cuban woman with a sweet smile. She is about 60, with short gray hair

ILLUSTRATION BY WILSON MCLEAN

worn like a stocking cap, and a faint mustache. She wears a chain with a cross around her neck.

"Sometimes the guests make me feel afraid," says Miriam. "But he was not a rough person. He was very gentle and nice." A man who is drinking from a can of beer stops at her desk for his room key. Miriam opens the cabinet behind her to get it. A semiautomatic pistol hangs from a nail on the back of the cabinet door.

Cunanan paid for his room in cash because the Normandy does not accept personal checks or credit cards. He did not give Miriam a $10 deposit to turn on his phone. He received no phone calls, no visitors, no mail. He talked to no one.

He never opened his curtains. He sat in his tiny room that smelled of Lysol and listened to the hum of his window air conditioner. He sat on a pink velvet chair at a kitchen table covered with linoleum, or he lay on a pink-and-blue polyester bedspread. He never cooked on the tiny, dented, rusted Fifties stove. He went out during the day to buy fast food, perhaps a pizza, a sub, a McDonald's hamburger, and some fashion magazines or a gay porno magazine. He returned immediately to eat and read. After he ate, he slept. When he woke at night to take a shower, he turned on the faucet and let the rust-colored water run out before he stepped in. After he dressed, he tidied up his room so neatly that the maid did not have to clean it. He went out late at night to Hombre and Twist and Liquid and Warsaw, gay bars and dance clubs on South Beach. He'd heard they were frequented by Versace.

But Cunanan got his information wrong. His timing was bad. That was the old Versace.

Versace lived four miles from the Normandy Plaza, on Ocean Drive, in Casa Casuarina, a restored 1930 Moorish castle patterned after the home of Christopher Columbus' son Diego in the Dominican Republic. It cost Versace $2.9 million, and more than $30 million to renovate in a style best described as gay baroque.

Casa Casuarina is the home of a Roman emperor—a Nero, not a Caesar. It is all decadent excess. It is a confluence of influences (Greek and Roman, for starters), with busts of Cupid and Pocahontas and Columbus and Confucius and Benito Mussolini. It is the mansion of a man whose philosophy of fashion was once summed up by his sister, Donatella, as, "Less is not more. Less is less." He once spent $3 million in two hours on furnishings for his Miami home. He was so excited by how much he had spent that when he returned home, he said, "I started to dance. I wanted to kiss myself."

In many ways, Versace's mansion typifies South Beach, a bouillabaisse of people of every nationality, race, religion and sexual persuasion. The district has a beach's laissez-faire lifestyle and a chic city's frenetic pace. At the same time there is palpable condescension toward anyone considered to be without style or beauty, which are the only moral virtues here.

Versace liked to throw lavish parties at Casa Casuarina for celebrity friends. There was no reason to leave his home at night, he once said, because it was the best place to be. He did occasionally venture out at night to a dance club, but mostly he found his pleasure in South Beach during the daylight and early evening, on the beach and the sidewalks, in cafés and restaurants and shops. He liked South Beach, he said, because it was the only place where he could relax. He moved effortlessly and usually unnoticed through the heavy human traffic, day and night.

"Everybody loves me," Versace said, and in South Beach almost everyone did love him. Except on the day of the murder. Before Versace left his house, the surveillance camera at the News Café picked up the shadowy image of Andrew Cunanan hanging around on the sidewalk, as if he were waiting for someone.

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"South Beach was becoming what it is in 1988, three years before Versace came here," says Jerry Powers, publisher of *Ocean Drive*, the model and celebrity magazine that chronicles the lives of South Beach's beautiful people.

Powers is a balding man with thick eyebrows. He is someone else whose success is tied up with the life of the place. His first office, where he put together the premiere issue of his magazine, was over the News Café. One morning he looked out his window and saw Versace sitting below at a table. He hurried downstairs to introduce himself to "the maestro" and ask him for an interview. Versace told him to contact his PR people, but when Powers did, they said the maestro was too busy.

"I told Versace what they said," says Powers, "and he said, 'Come to my hotel, I'll give you all the time you need.' He even got us Claudia Schiffer for our first cover."

Conventional wisdom has it that Versace came to South Beach to relax. But he did do business there. "He got inspiration from the styles of the street kids," says Powers. "He saw the tans and the color of the water and the pastel colors of the buildings and it affected him. Before, he used mostly primary colors. And he could take it all in while letting his guard down. You know, in Italy they kidnap you for ransom. But America is a violent society. We had 18 homicides in Miami during the week of Versace's murder."

In the early Eighties South Beach was a decrepit stretch of crumbling deco hotels inhabited by retirees waiting to die, crack dealers, Mariel boat people, a few surfer dudes and some brave people who wanted to live a pleasant life on the beach.

Then German photographers discovered it as a beautiful, cheap locale to shoot their summer catalogs. They began to bring in their models, some of whom stayed to live here. The models attracted men and art directors. Today there are 20 modeling agencies on the beach, and at any given time 4000 young men and women work or wait to work as models.

The Michele Pommier Building at 81 Washington Avenue in South Beach is a silver art deco structure with a circular entranceway of glass blocks. Inside there are floor-to-ceiling mirrors. Michele Pommier herself sits at a glass table and the walls around her are covered with photographs of the beautiful people she represents. Pommier, a conventionally pretty woman of 50, opened her modeling agency in 1988. She says it was South Beach's first agency and it is certainly one of the most successful today.

Pommier says the models were the founding settlers of this American Riviera. "Claudia Schiffer used to Rollerblade down Ocean Drive five years ago," she says. Then came the clubs like Liquid and Bar None, the restaurants like China Grill and the local magazines like *Ocean Drive*.

"The magazines and the clubs find us," says Pommier. "The girls don't get work because they're in *Ocean Drive*. *Ocean Drive* needs the models to exist, not the opposite. The same with the clubs." And then, according to Pommier, came the celebrities. She included Versace in this list. "He introduced South Beach to the fashion world by making his home here," says Pommier.

Pommier's assistant enters the room with two mugs of coffee. She puts them down on the glass table. Pommier glares at the mugs, then at her assistant. "Don't we have napkins?" she says. The assistant leaves and returns moments later with napkins. No one trifles with Pommier, especially not the models and the media.

A few days later, at midnight, dozens of models crowd the VIP room of Bar None, waiting for Pommier to arrive. Most of the models are men. They lie back, insouciantly, on couches against the wall, deep in conversation. The women stand around looking over their

"Your gift has been wrapped by Victoria's Secret."

shoulders for celebrities.

The male models are all handsome. The female models are exotic looking, but not conventionally pretty. They are dressed in retro outfits—short Qiana shirts that expose their navels, bell-bottom pants and platform shoes. They stand in that model's pose, stomach thrust forward, shoulders rounded like predatory birds on a branch.

Actor Peter Weller, who is in Florida directing an Elmore Leonard movie, *Gold Coast*, is on hand, sitting unnoticed in the VIP room. He stands, looks down at the bar, turns and waits for someone to recognize him. A model goes over to him and introduces herself. They talk intimately, with their faces close.

Well after midnight, a light appears at the entrance to Bar None. Pommier enters, followed by a television camera crew. The camera's light is so close to her face that she's the only person in the room who's clearly visible. "*Extra* [the TV show] has been filming me all night," she says. "First at the Forge, then at the China Grill, now here." She smiles. "See what happens when you put 'Michele Pommier' on an invitation?"

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"We're still trying to answer the question of how Cunanan went undetected during his time in Miami Beach," says Alfred Boza, a Miami Beach Police Department detective and spokesman. "He was not moving about with impunity. Someone at Miami Subs recognized him and called us, but he was gone when we arrived. The problem is Miami Beach's congestion. Sixty percent of the people on the beach are not permanent residents. They're from Miami or New Zealand or wherever. The influx of strangers is so great and Cunanan's look was so average it was hard to pick him out. He fit the description of any number of Latins on the beach. In fact, we grabbed a guy at Versace's memorial service who turned out to be a *Miami Herald* reporter."

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In the late afternoon sun, the beach is still crowded with sunbathers. Beautiful blonde and brunette women walk into the pale green water to cool off, then return to their blankets to sunbathe topless in thong bikinis. An older man with a perfect tan and a dyed blond ponytail tosses a Frisbee to his skinny boyfriend at the water's edge. The old guy, too, is wearing a thong, exposing his small, drooping ass.

Ocean Drive is crowded with exotic cars moving slowly north and south. The drivers and passengers lean out the windows and shout at pretty girls walking up the crowded sidewalk. The walkers stare at the people sitting at the outdoor café tables. The patrons stare back. Staring at people is the major activity on South Beach. It is less a place of conversation than it is a place to worship beauty.

At Wet Willie's, boys in bathing suits that show off their chiseled abs (chiseled abs for boys are big in South Beach), and their girlfriends in low-cut bikinis that show off their tiny waists and navels (navels for girls are big in South Beach), are getting rowdy as they drink. The girls sit on their boyfriends' laps, kicking up their legs and laughing loudly. Their boyfriends nuzzle their necks, shout from table to table and yell into their cell phones.

A little farther south, the outdoor tables of Café Milano are filled with a more chic clientele in their late 20s and early 30s. The crowd is dressed stylishly in Seventies retro for a late lunch. Café Milano is the kind of place Andrew Cunanan would have frequented, before he fell on hard times and had to eat subs in his room at the Normandy Plaza.

Inside, the restaurant's darkly wooded dining room is deserted, except for a few waiters in yellow shirts, sitting at a table, speaking Italian. The walls around them are decorated with faux Picasso prints and drawings.

"We opened in 1990," says Milano's owner, Massimo Barracca. "Versace was our first customer. He ate macaroni with mozzarella, tomatoes, basil and extra virgin olive oil. He would sit at a table with friends. Only at lunch. He was a lunch person, not a night person. He could go to late-night clubs in any city. He loved South Beach because it has such a large gay community. He could be himself here. He was accepted as a normal person. He felt free here. There's no real gay community in Italy. South Beach is just a village, though, like Italy in a lot of ways. A little city on the beach. It reminded Versace of Italy."

At the News Café, the sidewalk tables are filled with beautiful people and tourists who stare at the beautiful people. Inside, however, the small bar is deserted except for a gray-bearded man in a Hawaiian shirt watching *Oprah* on the television over the bar. Oprah's guest is Madonna, dressed in a pale-blue suit that makes her look fragile, like a suburban mother. It's a look Madonna has cultivated ever since her daughter, Lourdes, was born.

"So tell me," says Oprah. "What are you going to teach Lourdes about men?"

Madonna giggles like a girl, and blushes. The audience hoots, laughs and applauds.

A waitress walks by the TV and stops. "Oh, look! Madonna! I served her last week."

Oprah says, "What do you have to say about Dennis Rodman?"

The audience whoops and applauds and shrieks again. Madonna, looking quite stern now, waits until the noise dies down before she says, "I have no respect for a man who kisses and tells." The audience applauds her answer. People must have forgotten her documentary, *Truth or Dare*, in which Madonna exposes the foibles of her friends and her then lover, Warren Beatty.

Madonna was a friend of Versace's. They used to alternate New Year's Eve parties every year. One year, Versace sent only ten invitations to Madonna and she was insulted. So she boycotted the party.

The Versace Boutique is around the corner from the News Café. It is often deserted, except for a few muscleboys dressed in black, who stand with their arms folded across their chests at each of the four corners inside the store. They look like bodyguards, but what are they guarding? Versace's baroque prints?

Versace's reputation as an outrageous, risk-taking designer isn't really accurate. He was not a daring designer, but a timid one. His designs were derivative, influenced by classical Greek and Roman designs right down to his trademark Medusa's head. They were mathematically and geometrically plotted out, as if by an engineer. They were balanced, a rose on the left breast, an identical rose on the right breast. Then Versace colored them in with primary colors in the manner of a child compulsively unable to color outside the lines. Versace was a structured man, at least in his work, and, his friends say, in his life, too. That may be why he loved South Beach. It is unstructured. It is all soft edges blurring into one another. Its colors are muted pastels that bleed one into another. Life on South Beach is blurred with people of every class and race mingling in the same clubs and restaurants like paella, until they all become one.

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"I'll bet everyone loves your hair," says Kevin, as he snips and cuts.

"Why?" asks the silver-haired man in his 50s.

"It's so thick and soft," says Kevin. Snip. Snip.

"Yeah, but it's gray."

"Oh, I have boys come in here all the time and ask me to put silver in their hair. It's to die for."

(continued on page 215)

Playboy's Christmas Gift Guide

'TIS THE SEASON FOR EXTRAVAGANCE

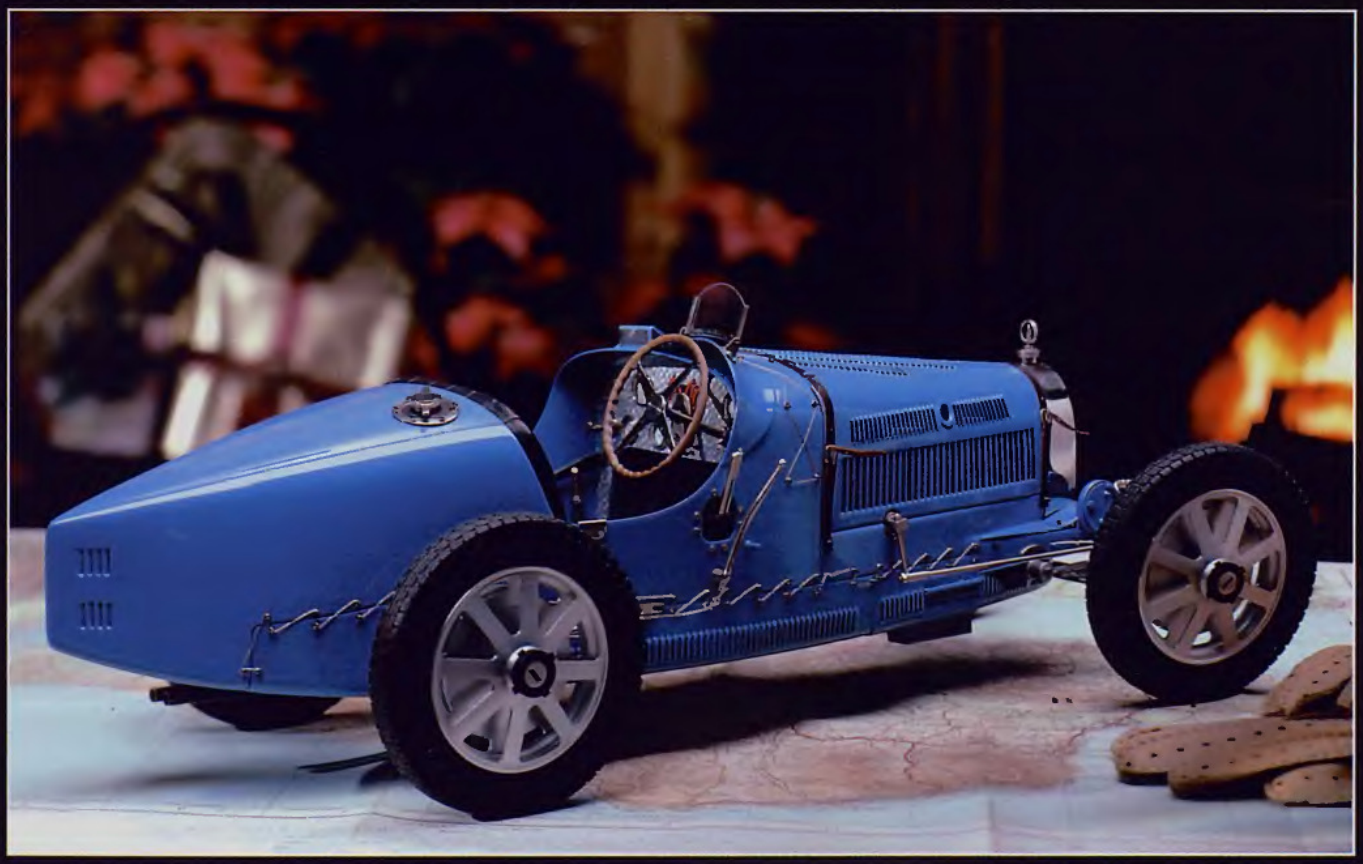
Think Santa has been big at your place in the past? Wait until you see him on Projectavision's new Digital Home Theater. It's the first time a 60-inch rear-projection TV has been combined with a computer display and a removable front-projection unit that can beam images of up to 20 feet (measured diagonally) onto a wall. And you won't need a gang of elves to move the unit, because it weighs only about 150 pounds ($10,000).

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD IZUI

Above: If you want a bike for Christmas from a company that took a bronze medal at the 1996 Olympics, wish for the Hotta TT with a carbon-fiber monocoque frame. It features Durace components and was designed by the Formula One Benetton racing team ($4000). Below left: To celebrate its 130th anniversary, Longines offers a limited-edition boxed set of three handcrafted watches (a chronometer, a chronograph and a world timer; $5295) that pays tribute to pioneering aviators through retro-look faces with Arabic numerals. Below right: Grundig and Porsche Design present the G2000A, an AM/FM/SW radio with great features (20 programmable memories and all 13 shortwave international bands, for example) at a price Scrooge would love—$160. A leather cover flipped behind the radio protects the G2000A's "aluminum look" housing.

Kawasaki's all-new Prairie 400 4x4 ATV is as much fun in the high country of Montana as it is in the Louisiana bayou. The automatic power-drive system enables you to simply select the high or low range and punch the throttle. Look, Santa—no shifting! Under the hood is a 27-horsepower liquid-cooled engine. Price: $6000.

Above left: This Eric Clapton numbered-edition Martin guitar is crafted of East Indian rosewood and Sitka spruce, with an ebony fingerboard and Clapton's signature inlaid in mother-of-pearl ($3500, including a case). Above right: Holland & Holland's eight-little-pewter-cups-in-a-row come in a leather carrying case ($290). Tote them with a bottle of Bowmore Darkest single malt scotch, which has spent 12 years in bourbon barrels and three more in sherry casks (about $80). Below: Fine Art Models builds this 1:8 scale Type 35B Bugatti exact in every detail, from spark plugs that can be unscrewed to brakes that work to a wood steering wheel. On the engine's firewall there's even a miniature plate with a serial number that can be read with a magnifying glass ($8500, in a limited edition of 139 models). Other vintage Bugattis are in the works.



Sony's new Super Steady Shot Digital Handycam is no bigger than a passport, yet it will shoot up to 90 minutes in LP mode and features a 2½-inch color LCD screen, digital stereo sound recording, a 120X digital zoom and digital editing capability. The photo mode fits more than 500 stills on a single tape (about $2900).

WHERE & HOW TO BUY ON PAGE 195.

Timequake

one of the world's most imaginative writers says this is his last invention

fiction by

KURT VONNEGUT

Ernest Hemingway in 1952 published in *Life* magazine a long short story called "The Old Man and the Sea." It was about a Cuban fisherman who hadn't caught anything for 84 days. The Cuban hooked an enormous marlin. He killed it and lashed it alongside his little boat. Before he could get it to shore, though, sharks bit off all the meat on the skeleton.

I was living in Barnstable Village on Cape Cod when the story appeared. I asked a neighboring commercial fisherman what he thought of it. He said the hero was an idiot. He should have hacked off the best chunks of meat and put them in the bottom of the boat, and left the rest of the carcass for the sharks.

It could be that the sharks Hemingway had in mind were critics who hadn't much liked his first novel in ten years, *Across the River and Into the Trees*, published two years earlier. As far as I know, he never said so. But the marlin could have been that novel.

And then I found myself in the winter of 1996 the creator of a novel which did not work, which had no point, which had never wanted to be written in the first place. *Merde!* I had spent nearly a decade on that ungrateful fish, if you will. It wasn't even fit for shark chum.

I had recently turned 73. My mother made it to 52, my father to 72. Hemingway almost made it to 62. I had lived too long! What was I to do?

Answer: Fillet the fish. Throw the rest away.

The premise of the novel, titled *Timequake One*, was that a timequake, a sudden glitch in the space-time continuum, made everybody and everything do exactly what they'd done during a past decade, for good or ill, a second

ILLUSTRATION BY ISTVAN BANYAI

time. It was déjà vu that wouldn't quit for ten long years. You couldn't complain about life's being nothing but old stuff, or ask if just you were going nuts or if *everybody* was going nuts.

There was absolutely nothing you could say during the rerun if you hadn't said it the first time through the decade. You couldn't even save your own life or that of a loved one if you had failed to do that the first time through.

I had the timequake zap everybody and everything in an instant from February 13th, 2001 back to February 17th, 1991. Then we all had to get back to 2001 the hard way, minute by minute, hour by hour, year by year, betting on the wrong horse again, marrying the wrong person again, getting the clap again. You name it!

Only when people got back to when the timequake hit did they stop being robots of their pasts. As the old science fiction writer Kilgore Trout said, "Only when free will kicked in again could they stop running obstacle courses of their own construction."

Trout doesn't really exist. He has been my alter ego in several of my other novels. But most of what I have chosen to preserve from *Timequake One* has to do with his adventures and opinions. I have salvaged a few of the thousands of stories he wrote between 1931, when he was 14, and 2001, when he died at the age of 84. A hobo for much of his life, he died in luxury in the Ernest Hemingway Suite of the writers' retreat Xanadu in the summer resort village of Point Zion, Rhode Island. That's nice to know.

His very first story, he told me as he was dying, was set in Camelot, the court of King Arthur in Britain: Merlin the Court Magician casts a spell that allows him to equip the Knights of the Round Table with Thompson submachine guns and drums of .45-caliber dumdums.

Sir Galahad, the purest in heart and mind, familiarizes himself with this new virtue-compelling appliance. While doing so, he puts a slug through the Holy Grail and makes Swiss cheese of Queen Guinevere.

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Here is what Trout said when he realized that the ten-year rerun was over, that he and everybody else were suddenly obligated to think of new stuff to do, to be creative again: "Oh, Lordy! I am much too old and experienced to start playing Russian roulette with free will again."

Yes, and I myself was a character in *Timequake One*, making a cameo appearance at a clambake on the beach at the writers' retreat Xanadu in the summer of 2001, six months after the end of the rerun, six months after free will kicked in again.

I was there with several fictitious persons from the book, including Kilgore Trout. I was privileged to hear the old, long-out-of-print science fiction writer describe for us, and then demonstrate, the special place of Earthlings in the cosmic scheme of things.

In *Timequake One*, Kilgore Trout wrote a story about an atom bomb. Because of the timequake, he had to write it twice. The ten-year rerun following the timequake, remember, made him and me, *and you*, and everybody else, do everything we'd done from February 17th, 1991, to February 13th, 2001, a second time.

Trout didn't mind writing it again. Rerun or not, he could tune out the crock of shit being alive was as long as he was scribbling, head down, with a ballpoint pen on a yellow legal pad.

He called the story "No Laughing Matter." He threw it away before anybody else could see it, and then had to throw it away again during the rerun. At the clambake at the end of *Timequake One*, in the summer of the year 2001, after free will kicked in again, Trout said this about all the stories he had torn to pieces and flushed down toilets, or tossed into trash-strewn vacant lots, or whatever: "Easy come, easy go."

"No Laughing Matter" got its title from what a judge in the story said during a top-secret court-martial of the crew of the American bomber *Joy's Pride*, on the Pacific island of Banalulu, one month after the end of World War Two.

Joy's Pride itself was perfectly OK, and in a hangar there on Banalulu. It was named in honor of the pilot's mother, Joy Peterson, a nurse in obstetrics at a hospital in Corpus Christi, Texas. *Pride* had a double meaning. It meant self-respect. It meant a lion family, too.

Here's the thing: After an atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, and then another one was dropped on Nagasaki, *Joy's Pride* was ordered to drop yet another one on Yokohama, on a couple of million "little yellow bastards." The little yellow bastards were called "little yellow bastards" back then. It was wartime. Trout described the third atom bomb like this: "A purple motherfucker as big as a boiler in the basement of a midsize junior high school."

It was too big to fit inside the bomb bay. It was slung underneath the plane's belly, and cleared the runway by a foot when *Joy's Pride* took off into the wild blue yonder.

As the plane neared its target, the pilot mused out loud on the intercom that his mother, the obstetrics nurse, would be a celebrity back home after they did what they were about to do. The bomber *Enola Gay*, and the woman in whose honor it was named, had become as famous as movie stars after it dropped its load on Hiroshima. Yokohama was twice as populous as Hiroshima and Nagasaki combined.

The more the pilot thought about it, though, the surer he was that his sweet widowed mother could never tell reporters she was happy that her son's airplane had killed a world's record number of civilians all at once.

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Trout's story reminds me of the time my late great-aunt Emma Vonnegut said she hated the Chinese. Her late son-in-law Kerfuit Stewart, who used to own Stewart's Book Store in Louisville, Kentucky, admonished her that it was *wicked* to hate that many people all at once.

Whatever.

The crewmen aboard *Joy's Pride*, at any rate, told the pilot on the intercom that they felt much as he did. They were all alone up there in the sky. They didn't need a fighter escort, since the Japanese didn't have any airplanes left. The war was over, except for the paperwork, which was arguably the situation even before *Enola Gay* had cremated Hiroshima.

To quote Kilgore Trout: "This wasn't war anymore, and neither had been the obliteration of Nagasaki. This was 'Thanks to the Yanks for a job well done!' This was *show biz* now."

Trout said in "No Laughing Matter" that the pilot and his bombardier had felt somewhat godlike on previous missions, when they had had nothing more than incendiaries and conventional high explosives to drop on people. "But that was godlike with a little *g*," he wrote. "They identified themselves with minor deities who only avenged and destroyed. Up there in the sky all alone, with the purple motherfucker slung underneath their plane, they felt like the Boss God himself, who had an option which hadn't been theirs before, which was to be *merciful*."

Trout himself had been in World War Two, but not as an airman and not in the Pacific. He had been a forward observer for the Army field artillery in

(continued on page 112)

"UPS? Santa Claus speaking. Could you do some emergency deliveries for me tonight?"

THE HISTORY OF THE BRA

A MIDSUMMER'S NIGHT EVE

Blame it on the snake. Thanks to him, our formerly nude first lady began hiding her forbidden fruit (left). Payback came when Saint Patrick kicked serpent tail and said the immortal words, "Erin, go braless!"

Let Them Eat Cheesecake

Ladies of France played peekaboob—a hint of nipple above one's corset was the way to distract a guy from a lack of shower time (above). The trend ended when Marie Antoinette went completely topless in 1793.

A LOVING LOOK AT THE UNDERGARMENT THAT UPLIFTS THE HUMAN SPIRIT

Simply put, the bra is a cradle of civilization. From the trim engineering of the ancient Roman *strophia* to the armored corsets of the Victorian era, the humble undergarment gives us a bird's-eye view of how various cultures treated their hidden mysteries. The search for its origin lends a bit of bounce to anthropology and keeps history students perky and upright. The bra has served alternately as a tool of seduction, a symbol of modesty and a means of support (especially when used by a stripper). At one point, the best bra was considered no bra at all. Now it's come fulsome circle. Today a good bra is something to behold—and something to be held, caressed and cast off. Over the years, we've gathered mounds of data on the subject. Here, then, is an illustrated chronicle in which we suspend our most firmly held beliefs.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BYRON NEWMAN

PRODUCTION AND STYLING BY BRIGITTE ARIEL
MAKEUP AND HAIR BY PATTI BURRIS

WARDROBE BY SLIM BARRETT, LONDON

THE JAZZ SWINGERS

Hot and fast were the catchwords in the Roaring Twenties when it came to Prohibition partywear (left). Looking back at the excuses that they used for bras adds new meaning to the term flappers.

Victory Over Cs

In the Forties the war effort created a shortage of silk and nylon, and women had to resort to gingham Maidenforms. Gung-ho GIs with eyes on the front found cotton offered delightfully weak defenses (above).

Sweet Chastity

The bra was a chastity belt for the chest during the Fifties (left). Until the arrival of a magazine called PLAYBOY, hot-rodders didn't know if breasts were round or square. Bras were loaded with straps, wires, snaps and hooks. By the time you figured out the combination lock on your girlfriend's bra, the Fifties had turned into the Sixties.

Burn, Baby, Burn

Hat's off to the guy who invented women's lib. Into the fire went these symbols of patriarchal oppression (above). Chicks flaunted their freedom on the steps of the Stock Exchange and on the floor of a VW bus. But it was too good to be true. Women missed the one thing that never let them down, and the age of free sex gave way to a new era of seduction.

PROPS AND WARDROBE FROM SPARKLE MOORE AT THE GIRL CAN'T HELP IT

Funky Punky

Vivienne Westwood resurrected the corset for street-wear. Madonna wore a bra as outerwear in *Desperately Seeking Susan*. And contrary to popular belief, Boy George didn't need a bra until his career went bust.

WARDROBE BY VIVIENNE WESTWOOD, LONDON

Wonder Wear

The "Wonder Why We Didn't Think of It Before" bra made the Nineties hot. It made every body feel good—and the more we handled it, the better we felt. The Wonderbra came from Sara Lee, the cheesecake people.

2000 and Two

Bras of the future will involve heat-seeking lasers and suspended animation. Of course, breasts of the future won't need support. Antigravity devices will keep them flying high. But there will always be a need for skimpy, sexy fashion. Here we unveil a futuristic trifle straight from the fevered mind of Jean-Paul Bustier (opposite).

ARMOUR BY NASTASI AND GRACE FOR SURRENDER, UK

"Her body was in our basement," said Trout, "but all I knew was that she had disappeared."

Europe, a lieutenant with binoculars and a radio, up with the Infantry or even ahead of it. He would tell batteries to the rear where their shrapnel or white phosphorus might help a lot.

He himself had certainly not been merciful, nor, by his own account, had he ever felt he should have been. I asked him at the clambake in 2001, at the writers' retreat Xanadu, what he'd done during the war, which he called "civilization's second unsuccessful attempt to commit suicide."

He said without a scintilla of regret, "I made sandwiches of German soldiers between an erupting Earth and an exploding sky, and in a blizzard of razor blades."

The pilot of *Joy's Pride* made a U-turn way up in the sky. The purple motherfucker was still slung underneath. The pilot headed back for Banalulu. "He did it," wrote Trout, "because that is what his mother would have wanted him to do."

At the top-secret court-martial afterward, everybody was convulsed with laughter at one point in the proceedings. This caused the chief judge to bang his gavel and declare that what those on trial had done was "no laughing matter." What people found so funny was the prosecutor's description of what people did at the base when *Joy's Pride* came in for a landing with the purple motherfucker only a foot above the tarmac. People jumped out of windows. They peed in their pants.

"There were all kinds of collisions between different kinds of vehicles," wrote Kilgore Trout.

No sooner had the judge restored order, though, than a huge crack opened in the floor of the Pacific Ocean. It swallowed Banalulu, court-martial, *Joy's Pride*, unused atom bomb and all.

Trout said at the clambake in 2001 that life was undeniably preposterous. "But our brains are big enough to let us adapt to the inevitable pratfalls and buffoonery," he went on, "by means of man-made epiphanies like this one." He meant the clambake on a beach under a starry sky. "If this isn't nice, what is?" he said.

He declared the corn on the cob, steamed in seaweed with lobsters and clams, to be *heavenly*. He added, "And don't all the ladies look like *angels* tonight!" He was feasting on corn on the cob and women as *ideas*. He couldn't eat the corn because the upper plate of his false teeth was insecure. His long-term relationships with women had been disasters. In the only love story he ever attempted, "Kiss Me Again," he had written, "There is no way a beautiful woman can live up to what she looks like for any appreciable length of time."

The moral of that story is this: "Men are jerks. Women are psychotic."

I wouldn't have missed the Great Depression or my part in World War Two for anything. Trout asserted at the clambake that our war would live forever in show biz, as other wars would not, because of the uniforms of the Nazis.

He commented unfavorably on the camouflage suits our own generals wear nowadays on TV, when they describe our blasting the bejesus out of some Third World country because of petroleum. "I can't imagine," he said, "any part of the world where such garish pajamas would make a soldier less rather than more visible.

"We are evidently preparing," he said, "to fight World War Three in the midst of an enormous Spanish omelette."

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I told Kilgore Trout at the clambake in 2001 about how my brother and sister had made Father ashamed of hunting and fishing. Trout quoted Shakespeare: "'How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child!'"

Trout was self-educated, never having finished high school. I was mildly surprised, then, that he could quote Shakespeare. I asked if he had committed a lot of that remarkable author's words to memory. He said, "Yes, dear colleague, including a single sentence which describes life as lived by human beings so completely that no writer after him need ever have written another word."

"Which sentence was that, Mr. Trout?" I asked.

And he said, "'All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players.'"

I asked him at Xanadu in the summer of 2001 how "Ting-a-ling" had become such a frequent appoggiatura, or grace note, in his conversations. He gave me what would later turn out to have been a superficial explanation. "It was something I crowed during the war," he said, "when an artillery barrage I'd called for landed right on target: 'Ting-a-ling! Ting-a-ling!'"

About an hour later, and this was on the afternoon before the clambake, he beckoned me into his suite with a crooked finger. He closed the door behind us. "You really want to know about 'Ting-a-ling'?" he asked me.

I had been satisfied with his first account. Trout was the one who wanted me to hear much more. My innocent question earlier had triggered memories of his ghastly childhood in Northampton. He could exorcise them only by telling what they were.

"My father murdered my mother," said Kilgore Trout, "when I was 12 years old.

"Her body was in our basement," said Trout, "but all I knew was that she had disappeared. Father swore he had no idea what had become of her. He said, as wife murderers often do, that maybe she had gone to visit relatives. He killed her that morning, after I left for school.

"He got supper for the two of us that night. Father said he would report her as a missing person to the police the next morning, if we hadn't heard from her by then. He said, 'She has been very tired and nervous lately. Have you noticed that?'

"He was insane," said Trout. "How insane? He came into my bedroom at midnight. He woke me up. He said he had something important to tell me. It was nothing but a dirty joke, but this poor, sick man had come to believe it a parable about the awful blows that life had dealt him. It was about a fugitive who sought shelter from the police in the home of a woman he knew.

"Her living room had a cathedral ceiling, which is to say it went all the way up to the roof peak, with rustic rafters spanning the airspace below." Trout paused. It was as though he were as caught up in the tale as his father must have been.

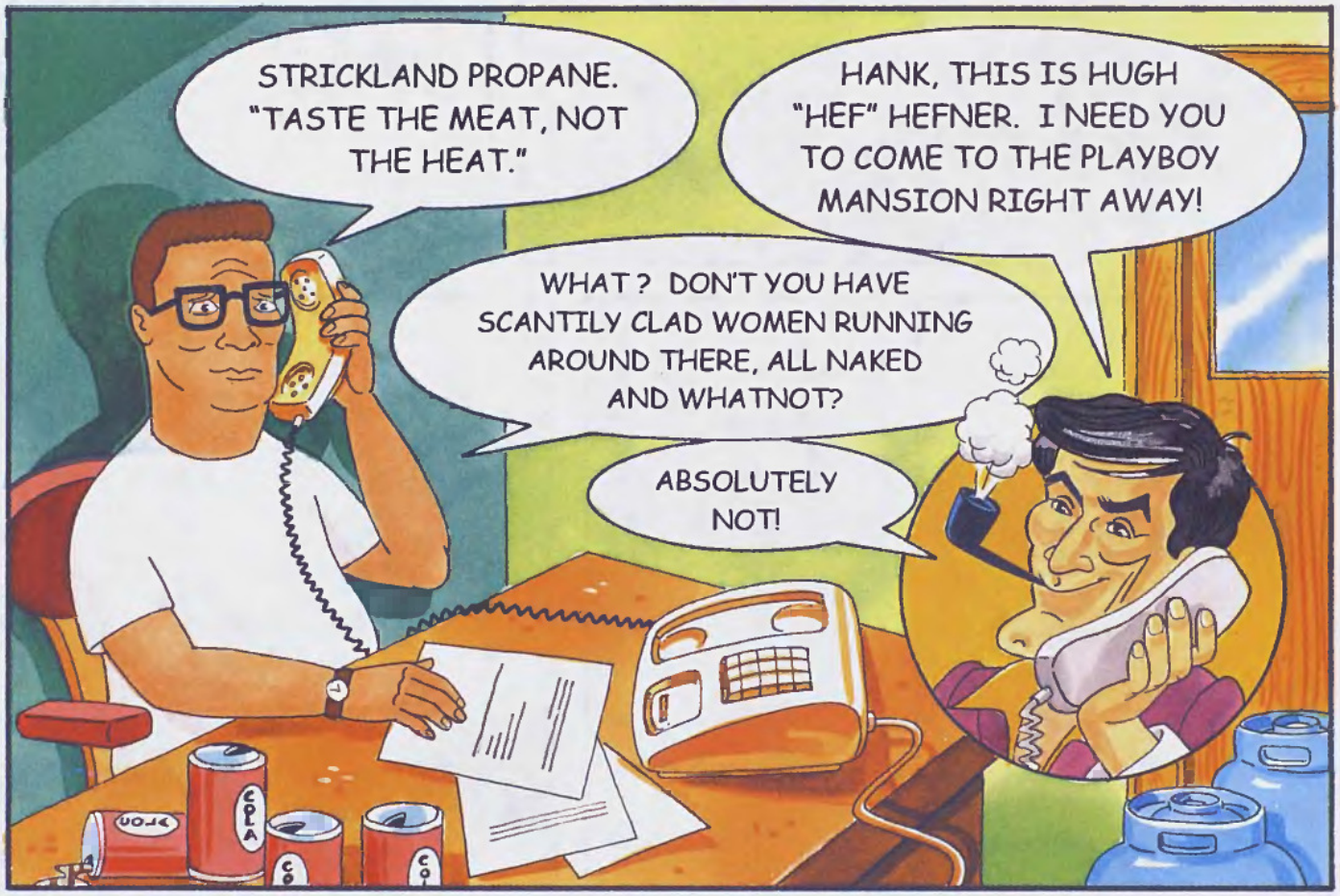
He went on, there in the suite named in honor of the suicide Ernest Hemingway: "She was a widow, and he stripped himself naked while she went to fetch some of her husband's clothes. But before he could put them on, the police were hammering on the front door with their billy clubs. So the fugitive hid on top of a rafter. When the woman let in the police, though, his

(continued on page 210)

ORIGINAL CHARACTERS
DRAWN BY MIKE JUDGE

KING OF THE HILL

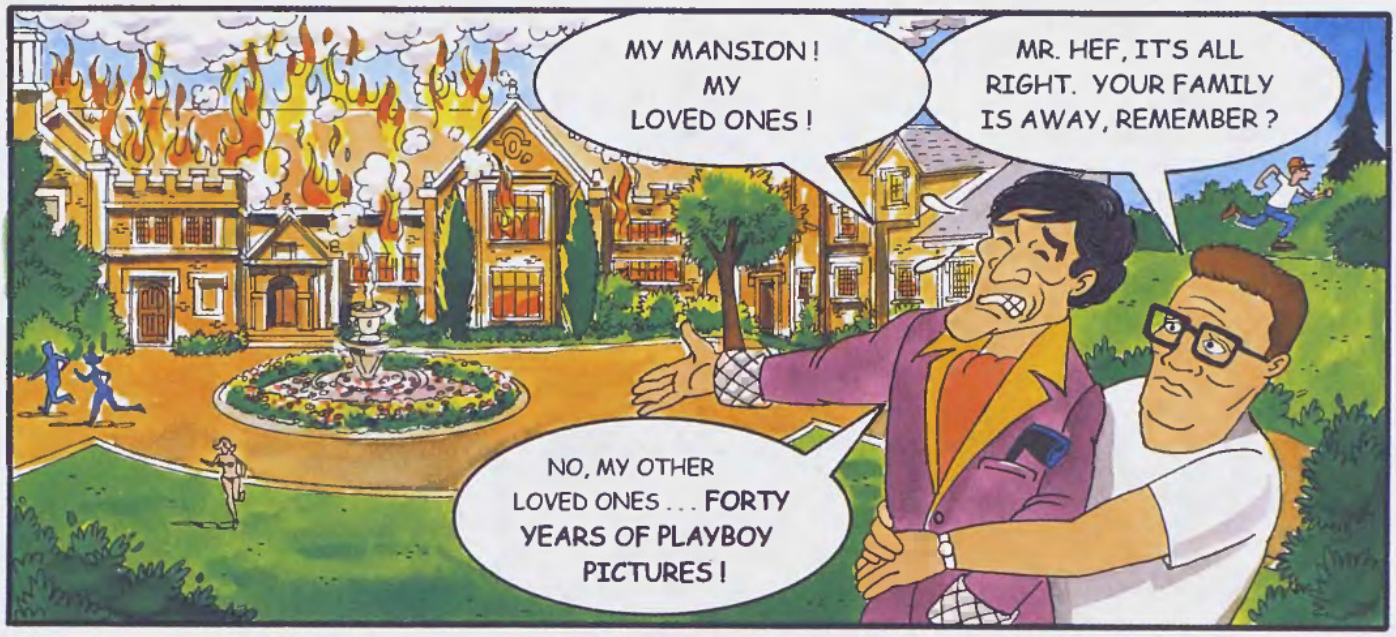
WRITTEN BY STEVE BARKER
ART BY STEVE BOSWICK


STRICKLAND PROPANE. "TASTE THE MEAT, NOT THE HEAT."
HANK, THIS IS HUGH "HEF" HEFNER. I NEED YOU TO COME TO THE PLAYBOY MANSION RIGHT AWAY!
WHAT? DON'T YOU HAVE SCANTILY CLAD WOMEN RUNNING AROUND THERE, ALL NAKED AND WHATNOT?
ABSOLUTELY NOT!

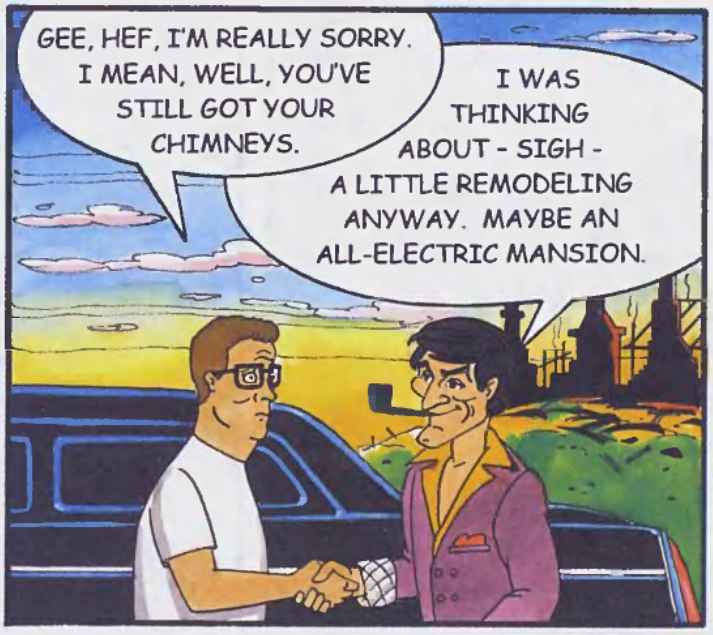
I'M THROWING A BIG BARBECUE TONIGHT, AND MY GRILL IS ON THE FRITZ! THINK YOU CAN FIX IT, HANK?
I'M FIXIN' TO FIX IT RIGHT NOW.
GREAT! YOUR ASSISTANTS ARE ALREADY HERE.

YEAH MAN, TELLYOUWHUT: DANG OL' HEF . . . HOT 'N' COLD RUNNIN' BUNNIES . . . PASS THE CHIPS, MAN.
HERE'S YOUR PROBLEM. YOUR LINE'S TOO SMALL. I COULD RUN A NEW MAIN TO HANDLE THE GRILL, THE GROTTO JACUZZI, PATIO . . .
THAT'S NICE, HANK.
JUST GET EVERYTHING READY. I GOTTA PICK OUT SOME PAJAMAS FOR THE PARTY TONIGHT.
THAT OUGHT TO DO THE JOB. WE'LL JUST KEEP AN EYE ON THIS REGULATOR HERE, GUYS.
GUYS ?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN HEF'S KOI POND ? THOSE FISH ARE PETS !
WOO-EE, MAN! DANG OL' CARP . . . JUMPIN' IN MY LAP . . . NO LIMIT, MAN . . .
THE PARTY THAT NIGHT
HI, HANDSOME. WANT TO DANCE ?
WHAT ? ME ? OH, NO, I COULDN'T. I'M MARRIED. TO MY WIFE. ANYWAY, I HAVE TO CONTROL THE PROPANE.
WHO'S THE HUNK ?
SOME ENERGY TYCOON. HE CONTROLS ALL THE PROPANE.
OOOOOH ! HE MUST BE WORTH BILLIONS !

MEANWHILE . . .
HMMM. NOW WHY WOULD ANY NORMAL HUMAN BEING NEED THREE DISHES? UNLESS . . . THEY WERE PART OF THE CIA? OR THE TRILATERAL COMMISSION? THE ROSICRUCIANS? THE DAIRY COUNCIL?
Mack
TELLYOUWHUT, MAN, DANG OL' FISH FRY . . . ADD THEM ONIONS . . . HUSH PUPPY POWDER. DOGGONE GOOD EATIN' . . . TEACH A MAN TO FISH, MAN . . .
WHAT?
I DON'T UNDERSTAND A WORD EITHER, BUT THE WAY HE SAYS IT, HE'S SO . . . MMM, SEXY!
CHECK OUT THAT T-SHIRT! IT'S SO SIMPLE, SO CLASSIC, SO . . . FRUIT OF THE LOOM.
DAMN! GIORGIO NEVER DID THAT FOR ME.
JUST A TRIM NOW. RIGHT, BILL?
JUST RELAX, MR. KING. THIS IS MY SPECIALTY.
BUT, HANK, ENERGY IS SO VOLATILE! HOW DO YOU CONTROL THE FLUCTUATIONS?
WELL, RIGHT NOW I'M DOING IT MYSELF. THE REGULATOR DOESN'T WORK!
CIGAR, MR. HILL?
HE'S IN COMPLETE CONTROL OF THE ENERGY MARKET! SELL ALL MY SHARES OF MICROSOFT AND BUY, BUY, BUY! YES, EVERYTHING IN PROPANE!
MASS YOUR TROOPS ALONG THE BORDER, GENERAL. WE ATTACK AT DAWN.
I MUST HAVE THOSE PROPANE FIELDS!
OH MAN! THIS IS THE BIG ONE! THEY'RE COMMUNICATING TO THEIR MINIONS THROUGH ESPN2 SATELLITES! THE CONSPIRACY TO END ALL CONSPIRACIES!
Mack
THE SPY SATELLITE CONTROLS! HEH HEH.
Wooosh!
WELL, HERE'S A LITTLE TWIST YOU DIDN'T COUNT ON, COMRADES!
DALE!
NOOOOOOOOO!


MY MANSION! MY LOVED ONES!
MR. HEF, IT'S ALL RIGHT. YOUR FAMILY IS AWAY, REMEMBER?
NO, MY OTHER LOVED ONES... FORTY YEARS OF PLAYBOY PICTURES!

DANG OL' RACKET... HURT MY EARS, MAN... CAN'T SLEEP...
THAT'S RIGHT, HONEY. TELLYOUWHUT...


GEE, HEF, I'M REALLY SORRY. I MEAN, WELL, YOU'VE STILL GOT YOUR CHIMNEYS.
I WAS THINKING ABOUT - SIGH - A LITTLE REMODELING ANYWAY. MAYBE AN ALL-ELECTRIC MANSION.

GOOD! THEY'RE GONE! THAT LITTLE SNEAKY MAN ALMOST UNCOVERED OUR PLAN FOR WORLD DOMINATION! NOW... WHERE WERE WE?
FIXING ENERGY PRICES, CHOOSING THE NEXT POPE, STARTING THE WAR IN CANADA ... AND PICKING THE PLAYMATE OF THE YEAR!
WHOA! NOW YOU'VE GONE TOO FAR!!

Women BOXING

women are going to war in the ring. why do they brawl, and why do guys watch?

article by AMY HANDELSMAN

I HAD CRUISED by the place a thousand times on my way to work, and I was always put off by its garishness. And no matter how late I drove home it was open. Twenty-four hours a day? It had to be nefarious, illicit. One night, stopped at a traffic light, I glanced up at the third-floor windows, where a neat row of red leather gloves beckoned. When the light changed I pulled over and parked.

The Hollywood Boxing Gym is a large, mirrored, one-room arena, airy and bright—a world apart from the tattooed, muscle-bound weight lifters who grunt below. It is run by Terry Claybon, master charmer and motivator, whose sly blend of jive, affection and discipline has won him a large and loyal following. I didn't know that then, of course. I knew only that I stepped into the room and was greeted with, "What is really goin' on," and felt that I had found a home.

An unlikely home, to be sure. I'm a writer and producer, a former development executive. I have a degree from Harvard in art history. My first and only brush with boxing had been 12 years before at the old Gramercy Gym in New York, a third-floor walk-up just off Union Square. Saturday mornings Norman Mailer rented the place for himself and a coterie of disciples, down-at-the-heels, overeducated types somewhere along in their first novels who were relieved to be doing something so concrete.

That was the Eighties. Twelve years later I was in between sports, past my obsessions with running, horseback riding, hip-hop dance classes and Rollerblading. I was getting jittery and fat. I was ready for something new.

With Terry as tutor I boxed three times a week, at seven in the morning. My friends were astonished. In the past, only an early morning flight could get me up at that hour. I'd have gone every day, if I could. I was hooked. I got sleeker and stronger. The blinding headaches from overexertion stopped. I worked harder at this sport than I had at any other, and it required more, in terms of

ILLUSTRATION BY KADIR NELSON

Women battling women: The two-day final of the New York Golden Gloves at Madison Square Garden (top three photos) featured 21 women in 11 weight classes. This was only the third year women fought alongside men. At the first-ever Women's National Championships in Augusta, Georgia, 66 boxers competed. The winners (bottom) flaunt their belts. Says Garden referee Danny Gant: "Women are the most dangerous things in the universe."

power, coordination, speed, stamina, timing, rhythm and balance. And because of Terry, it was more fun.

Terry gives his advanced students monikers like real prizefighters'. We were Speedy, Smiley, Tiny, Hercules, Pit Bull, Slasher, Big Bad Dan and Wonder Woman. My friend Jordan was Mr. Clean. He wore a bandanna and hoop earrings, and washed out his wraps every night with rubbing alcohol. The boy who teased me unmercifully was Mr. Cool. Fast, clever, elusive, stylish, I became Miss Slick. No pet name sounded sweeter.

Annie Vitiello, an HBO administrator, won the 1995 New York Golden Gloves in the 112-pound division.

When the rest of my life—career, romance—got bumpy, I took great comfort in boxing's rituals: the careful wrapping of the hands, the manners and sportsmanship of the ring. The routine of the workouts, from jumping rope to shadowboxing to working the heavy bag, double-end bag and speed bag to doing sit-ups, saved me from having to plan or think. Time was clearly marked, in three-minute intervals. I could always count on a one-minute rest. As strenuous as it was, it was also simple and direct, which are values in short supply in Hollywood.

I became a student of the game, devouring books, watching fight films, collecting magazines and catalogs. I pored over old boxing photographs as if they were ancient runes, startled by my deep longing and nostalgia.

Last spring I timed a long trip to my native New York to coincide with the finals of that city's Golden Gloves, the nation's largest regional amateur tournament, sponsored each year by the *Daily News*. I wanted to see where I fit in this new world and who else had my obsession.

A smattering of women have boxed professionally for years, but it wasn't until 1993, when 16-year-old Dallas Malloy of Bellingham, Washington sued U.S. Amateur Boxing, that women were accepted into the amateur ranks. More than 800 women are currently registered with the association, which is the national governing body for Olympic-style boxing. Across the country, women are moving into sweaty gyms for the real deal. Among the finalists in the 1997 New York Gloves were an accountant, a dancer, a grammar school teacher, a corrections officer, an attorney, a bus driver, a photo-lab operator and a nurse.

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On the first night of the finals, I sneak through the back corridors of Madison Square Garden and linger at the threshold of the locker room, peering in at my heroines. Eleven women, ages 20 to 33, are perched on top of a long serving table, waiting for their weigh-in. They are of various shapes—sleek, stocky, rangy, squat, willowy, fat—and are lined up from smallest to largest. They sit in their underwear. Some wear white cotton briefs pulled up to their waistlines, others wear lacy bikinis or thongs.

Their feet dangle from the table. This is the last time they will all be together, and they speak softly to one another. They shouldn't—it's bad luck—but the fight doctor is late for their exams and they are curious and bored.

For some, tonight's will be their first bouts in the tournament. With so few women registered in the Gloves, those in certain weight classes have advanced untested past the quarterfinals and semifinals. One is Laura Schere, a gamine, 112-pound editor and Ph.D. candidate in cultural studies. Laura

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"That's very nice, Mr. Scrooge. Do you have it in a medium or a large?"

THE TWELVE GIZMOS OF CHRISTMAS

THEY MAY LOOK LIKE THEY'RE FROM OUTER SPACE, BUT THESE ELECTRONIC MARVELS PERFORM IN WAYS THAT ARE ANYTHING BUT ALIEN

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(1) Motorola's wireless Voice Pager delivers holiday greetings (or "Bah, humbug!") in the sender's own voice (about $150 plus monthly service charge). **(2)** The clamshell Quolcomm Q digital cell phone also operates as an alphanumeric pager (about $500). **(3)** E.T. wouldn't have stayed lost for long if he'd toted Mogellon Systems' GSC 100 globol satellite communicator, o portable device that con send and receive text messoges vio e-moil onywhere in the world (about $1500). **(4)** It was de-

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signed for students, but postgrads are also chomping at the Apple eMate 300, a mobile computer with five applications that's wrapped up in an eye-catching molded-plastic-and-steel chassis that can toke rough treotment (about $750). **(5)** The D1000 Digital Voice Recorder by Olympus is the first with miniature card removable media, making it easy to dump your dictations to any laptop or desktop PC with a PCMCIA slot ($300). **(6)** The Glove is a one-hand video game controller with a serious twist: Natural movements of your wrist direct the game chorocters on-screen, leoving all digits free to tap action buttons positioned just under your fingertips (about

5

4

$90). **(7)** Hayes' Accura 56K External Data/Fax Modem offers superfast access to the Internet over ordinary phone lines (about $190). **(8)** With a Casio Data Bank VDB 200B-1 strapped to your wrist, you'll never forget oppointments, addresses, etc. You can store brilliant thoughts in the gizmo, too, using its touch screen (about $120). **(9)** You will see mommy kissing Santa Claus across the country if you hook up two Via TV Desk Top Videophones, which tronsmit telephone-quality audio and video

WHERE & HOW TO BUY ON PAGE 195.

simultaneously when connected to your phone (about $600 each). **(10)** ACS Wireless' Aurea Headset System lets you carry on a hands-free conversation up to 40 feet from the base station (about $330). **(11)** The Panasonic Egg Cam is a desktop color camera and microphone for audio/video communication between computers. It also transmits video messages to anyone with e-mail (under $200). **(12)** Solo by Escort is a mini cordless radar detector that sniffs out all bands and laser beams ($200).

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DONATO GIANCOLA/PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES IMBROGNO

"What is it like to be in love with someone who's a warrior? It's beyond my wildest dream."

is with Danna Scott, one of the few licensed female corners. Danna tells her to "take deep breaths and feel your feet in your shoes."

Danna handles her fighter like a trainer with a thoroughbred. She massages Laura's hands to warm them, then wraps them with tape and gauze. She never breaks contact. Her hand is on her fighter's shoulder as she leads her from backstage, up the aisles, past noisy fans and into the ring. "You have to let them know that you will take them there, that they don't have to figure that out," says Scott. "The only thing they have to do is fight."

The Garden's Theater feels more like a high school gymnasium than Las Vegas. Amateur boxing is a team sport, and local clubs come out to support their fighters. The fans are rowdy. Turf wars erupt, but are quickly settled.

The women's bouts are sprinkled between the men's, who outnumber them two to one. The crowd has favorites, women they've followed since their first appearances two years ago. Laura's cronies on the lobster shift of the law firm where she works wave giant claws as she beats an attorney in a hyped grudge match. Denise Lutrick, a soccer coach from Westchester, is cheered by her varsity squad in uniform. They unfurl a banner that says PUT THE BODY IN A BAG. Evelyn Rodriguez, a 5′8″, 156-pound bus driver, stalks dancer Meagan McBain and puts the mojo on her with a red-rimmed stare.

The fight of the tournament is between two 165-pounders, Tanya Dean of Gleason's Gym versus Susan Gadomski of the New Bed-Stuy Boxing Center. It is a classic matchup: Dean, a southpaw boxer, and Gadomski, a brawler inspired by Dean's fight two years ago in the Gloves. It doesn't figure to be much of a contest. Dean has trained corrections officers in defensive tactics, while Gadomski has lost 40 pounds and quit smoking for the fight. Dean is a seasoned competitor; Gadomski is a virgin.

Dean comes out swinging. Within ten seconds, Gadomski is down, and struggles through the first two rounds. But Gadomski hangs in and takes her beating with an iron chin. In the third and final round she has Dean on the ropes and the crowd on its feet. Tanya wins—in a 3-2 decision—but if the fight had gone a few seconds longer, Susan might have taken it.

They embrace, and the badly bruised Gadomski is led toward the dressing rooms by her second. He is a tall, regal man with dreadlocks to his waist, and had been whispering to Susan throughout the fight. I trail behind them, an eager fan. More than that, I need someone like him in my corner, and want to have her heart.

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A few days later I catch up with Susan and her cornerman boyfriend, Randy, in Bedford-Stuyvesant. This is one of the toughest neighborhoods in Brooklyn, and they volunteered to meet me at the subway. She waits at the turnstile as I exit, and we drive in his new red Plymouth Neon through rain-slicked streets to the gym.

New Bed-Stuy is a family place, lovingly decorated with murals of its trainers and former champs (Riddick Bowe, Mark Breland). Except for Faber (Susan's sometime sparring partner) and Harry Keitt (her trainer), the gym is empty. It is early yet. Faber mans the door, Randy slips out for coffee, and Susan, Harry and I pull up three metal folding chairs to discuss her fight with Tanya Dean.

Harry has a unique perspective, because the first woman he ever trained was Tanya. He knew she would come out swinging, but he also knew she would tire. "Tanya is a nervous fighter. She works off adrenaline," Keitt says. Adrenaline, like anger, is your enemy in the ring. Susan has the opposite problem—she's a slow starter. That's a liability when you have only three two-minute rounds to fight.

Harry likes training women. "They go toe-to-toe," he says. "They don't quit. They don't complain." He finds them more dedicated, more disciplined than male boxers. They come with less baggage and learn faster than men. Harry's teaching methods are the same for both sexes: "They get hit by the same punches, so I train them the same way."

Randy returns and we get on the subject of his romance with Susan. Randy is a martial arts instructor who met Susan in his kickboxing class. (Many female boxers start out kickboxing and switch.) The couple now lives in East New York. I ask Randy what it's like to be in love with a warrior. He smiles a Cheshire cat's smile.

Although Randy and Susan had been together almost three years, he didn't meet her folks until the Gloves. Like a lot of the women I interviewed, Susan kept her plans to compete from her family until right before her first fight. Her father and sister attended her preliminary bout, which she ended up not having to fight. But her mother decided only the night before to go to the finals. At first she had refused to attend—"That's the last place I want to see my baby"—and Randy feels she blames him for Susan's involvement in the sport.

But when it came down to it, Susan says, nothing could keep her mother away. "She was a wreck after the fight. She saw me with the black eye. She was standing there with flowers, emotional. She said, 'I think I sat a little too close.'"

Randy has more in common with Susan's mom than either may think. He also gets emotional when he sees Susan in the ring: "It's more than proud. I feel like crying, like a mother with a child. What is it like to be in love with someone who's a warrior? It's beyond my wildest dream."

It takes a while for men to get used to seeing women get hit. If the women are good fighters, the men get over it. It's the same for the participants. Of the women I know, there is a consensus: You feel shock at first. You learn not to let it anger you—you focus and counterpunch. Many say they're nervous in a fight until that first punch, and then they stop feeling anything.

You would think being a part of this masculine domain would make us feel more masculine. In fact, the reverse is often true. Its brutality allows a softer side to flourish.

Some of us cultivate it in the ring. We wear pink shorts; we get manicures and pedicures before a fight. Some of us leave the ring and then transform, wearing heels, stockings, short dresses. The switch comes naturally. We were the tomboys, the ones getting into scrapes with our brothers or the guys up the street. We didn't want to be boys, we wanted to wrestle with them.

Boxing, women actually feel more like women. It tightens your buttocks, narrows your stomach, thrusts out your chest. It enhances self-confidence, which is always a magnet.

There are a few concessions to gender in amateur boxing. Women are required to wear breast protectors and sign waivers attesting they are not pregnant. There haven't been studies done on the long-term effects of boxing on a woman's reproductive capabilities, but there haven't been any documented problems with it, either.

My 86-year-old aunt was horrified by my boxing and begged me not to tell

(continued on page 124)

When 18-year-old visitor June Wilkinson marched into our offices in Chicago in the summer of 1958, the men in the Photo Department immediately named her staggering chest the "first Bosom worthy of a capital B." Before you could say "Hollywood or bust," June had become a movie starlet and a prize pin-up subject. The fetching kitten from Britain was featured many times on the pages of PLAYBOY. The above shot of the alluring June graced our November 1960 issue.

Women BOXING (continued from page 122)

"Once I'm in the ring, I'm an animal. I see the girl climb in, and I'm like, 'What are you doin' in here?'"

anyone—especially not any potential suitors. I haven't followed her advice, and I'm glad. Men are intrigued by it, if not charmed. At the least, it helps the conversation.

•

Randy drops Susan off at her job at a photo lab and me at the subway to East Harlem. I have a date with two champs—the 119-pound fireplug Leona Brown and the 156-pound priestess Evelyn Rodriguez.

The Thomas Jefferson Recreation Center, at 112th Street and First Avenue, is run by the New York City Parks Department. The husband-and-wife team of Mickey and Negra Rosario presides over its boxing programs. They have been in the fight business for more than 40 years; Negra was one of the first female trainers and still trains many children, including her 11-year-old granddaughter, Megan.

Kids are racing around the place, and Leona and I hide in an empty locker room to talk. She is 4'11", wearing denim shorts and a denim vest that shows off her biceps. We talk fight strategy. Because of her height, Leona needs to get inside, and throws lots of punches. When asked about her defense, she says, "My offense is my defense. If you're trying to look pretty, you ain't throwin' no punches."

I was, in fact, disappointed by the level of the women's defense at the Gloves. A good defense (blocking punches, slipping, bobbing and weaving) is an acquired skill, and for novices—both male and female—it's the first thing out the window under pressure. There's also a difference between amateur and pro strategy. A pro fighter gets points for defensive style, and, with more rounds, there's time to move around, to "look pretty." In the amateurs points are scored by blows landed, which can encourage wild haymakers.

Leona quit her job as a school bus driver to devote herself to training. She has no time for dating ("That's another kind of workout at night") and wants to go pro. She seems unstoppable. "Nothing scares me in the ring," she says. "Nothing. Once I'm in the ring, I'm an animal. I transform into an animal. And that's it. I see the other girl climb over the ropes, and I'm like, 'What are you *doin'* in here? I'm getting ready to tear you apart!'"

Leona and Evelyn pass in the halls but do not speak. There's bad blood—a nasty sparring session. (They've since made up.) Every few feet, someone calls out, "Hey, champ!" The girls have done well by Thomas Jeff.

Evelyn and I go sit on the stoop. It is drizzling. I was terrified of her in the Garden, but now she's sweet and girlish. She lives in Flushing but has strong ties to East Harlem. She would like to give back to the neighborhood by opening a gym for battered women.

We talk about her fight with Meagan McBain. It's true, she hypnotized her. "I actually looked through her with my eyes. I was drawing fear out of her eyes." Meagan left the ring with an ice pack on her face. I ask Evelyn if it is hard to reconcile being a woman with causing pain. She tells me that that's her job. But when she leaves the ring, she says, "I'm a whole different person. I'm more humble. I'm more lovable. I'm concerned."

Evelyn asks me if I have Meagan's phone number. We use the Rosarios' office to call. An answering machine responds. Evelyn hangs up. But she makes me promise to deliver this message: "I just want to apologize if I inflicted any kind of damage on you. If you need any help, if I can do anything for you, just let me know. I'm here. Don't hesitate to give me a call. I hope you feel better."

Evelyn and I walk to the subway stop. I ask if she thinks we are stronger than our West Coast counterparts. She says, "Of course. We are New Yorkers. We are the roughest, the toughest. Ain't nobody badder than us." I feel safe, and proud to be with her. She asks if I might like to spar sometime. I look at the six-inch-long scar down her face, remember a different Evelyn in the ring and decline.

The equation of women and aggression is not easily solved. Johnnie Woluewich, a USA Boxing official and administrator, feels that men box to get their aggression out, while women get more aggressive when they fight. Trainer Milton LaCroix thinks girls can take getting hit more than guys, and definitely slug more. He feels, by nature, women are more vicious than men: "To sit and have a baby, you have to be some kind of vicious person. They can take more punches than we can. I'll tell you that much. I can't imagine no guy having no baby."

Referee Danny Gant, a behavioral therapist, agrees. "Women are the most dangerous things in the universe. Women are mothers, and there's something about being a mother that makes a woman a bitch if she has to be, that makes her an angel, that makes her whatever she has to be. Her job is to protect, period."

To say all women like to inflict damage is facile, however, and misleading. Flyweight Laura Schere feels boxing is less about hurting someone and more about domination, about winning. Even so, she likes "the license that you're allowed in the ring to hit someone, where you're not allowed to anywhere else." Sometimes, sitting on the subway, she imagines what she could do: "I could just haul off and hit someone. I love that feeling that I could just punch all these people in the face and knock them all out."

For Annie Vitiello, it's also about potential. An elegant administrator at HBO who won the 1995 Gloves in the 112-pound division, Annie is a ring strategist who finds boxing "more like fencing or chess than beating somebody up." But she's made the moves to stop someone when she's had to, and feels grateful. "Here's a part of me I never would have discovered. There's a strength and ferocity. Not viciousness, but fierceness. Thank you, universe. Thank you, God. It doesn't mean I have to do anything with it. But I can. It's there."

•

I go to Rikers Island to pay homage to Tyrene Manson, the 106-pound female heralded as the next Sugar Ray Robinson, who's facing a four- to nine-year term for drug possession.

It starts as something of an ordeal. I nearly miss Friday's two P.M. Rikers Island Express—the last bus before the weekend. And when I board, there's standing room only. The women are all dolled up, with long, polished fingernails, elaborate hairdos and tight clothes. I have dressed down to be inconspicuous. It backfires.

At the holding area before we are shuttled to our final destination, I am handed a form to fill out. What is my relation to the prisoner? Friend? Family? Spouse? I put down: Colleague. Fellow boxer.

I learn that Tyrene has already had one visitor that day, and I am denied. I reason with the guard: I have come this far from California. He wants me to show him a California driver's license. I drop it into the plastic container with the other picture IDs, mostly food-stamp cards.

We unload at a long row of metal

(continued on page 180)

"We just sing carols, Mister. We don't do extras."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHEN WAYDA AND RICHARD FEGLEY

Winter Wonder

playmate karen mcdougal wants to take the chill out of the season

AS A SMALL-TOWN GIRL in Sawyer, Michigan, Karen McDougal was a tomboy until a late-teens growth spurt turned her into a beauty queen. Now the 26-year-old preschool teacher doubles as a Venus International Swimwear model. Karen's latest moonlighting gig is even more dazzling: Sawyer's pride is now our Miss December.

Q: How have folks back home reacted to the news that you're PLAYBOY's latest Playmate?

A: With shock. I was always wholesome little Karen. In high school my nickname was Barbie, as in Barbie doll—the nice, sweet, perfect girl. That sort of girl isn't expected to be

seen in the most-looked-at men's magazine in the world. But I think it's going to work out. Now that people are getting used to the idea, they're treating me like a celebrity.

Q: What are the rewards of spending your days with people half your size?

A: I teach preschool because I love kids. I want to have a few children of my own one of these days. My mother has 12 brothers and sisters, each with at least six kids of their own. I have almost 100 cousins. If I can find the right man, I want to start adding to the family total. I'm a nurturer.

Q: One with sensational biceps. Do you bench-press toddlers at work?

A: No, but I do work out every day. I think strength is important to a woman. It's energizing. It gives you the self-confidence you need to succeed.

Q: What's your personal best as a weight lifter?

A: I don't go for bulk. My best in the squat is 140 pounds.

Q: Do the youngsters where you work know you are also a swimwear model and a Playmate?

A: No. To them I'm just Miss Karen.

Q: Your wholesome look is also a little exotic. What is your heritage?

Avid sportswoman Karen stays in shape with indaor and outdoar activities that keep her strong and limber. Daily warkouts hone the "bubble butt" she is praud of. Miss December relishes her opportunity to lift men's spirits this winter. "I have na problem with posing this way. When men see these pictures, I want them to want me," she admits.

A: Irish and Native American. I suppose I got my cheekbones from my Cherokee grandfather; the Irish side of the family must be responsible for my pert little nose.

Q: Can a woman be both wholesome and sexy?

A: Definitely. A woman can be whatever she wants to be. It's all in her attitude. I am truly a sweet, down-to-earth girl, soft and mild. But I can be crazy if the time is right.

Q: How does it feel to be Sawyer's premiere sex symbol?

A: I'm excited. Do you know I'm one of the oldest Playmates this year? I take care of my body. I'm proud to show it off. I hope you'll look at me and say, "Hey, that's not bad for 26 years old."

Q: What do you see yourself accomplishing in the next ten years?

A: By 2007 I hope I'll be running my own learning center for preschoolers. I would like to have at least three kids of my own. And I'd like to be as spunky at 36 as I am today."

To get closer to Karen McDougal, you can call the Playboy Super Hotline. See page 203 for details.

MISS DECEMBER
PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH
Karen McDougal

PLAYMATE DATA SHEET

NAME: Karen McDougal

BUST: 34C WAIST: 24" HIPS: 34

HEIGHT: 5'8" WEIGHT: 125

BIRTH DATE: 3-23-71 BIRTHPLACE: Gary, Indiana

AMBITIONS: I want to model, act and someday open a learning Center for children.

TURN-ONS: Blue eyes, Bubble butts (rounded glutes), Strawberries & Champagne at the hot tub.

TURNOFFS: Negativity, bitchy people, people who think they are "players."

SEX APPEAL: I respond to a man who is sensitive to a woman's needs, a man who is creative romantically, yet who knows how to be wild at the same time.

PERFECT DATE: A candlelight dinner in Paris, then a walk on the beach. At dusk, a hot-air balloon ride - looking down at the city lights. Then My Man tucks Me into Bed.

Class of '89

Cheerleaders at Nursing Class

Winning "Venus" Prelims

PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

After reviewing his data, a sexologist telephoned one of the volunteer couples. "There seems to be a discrepancy in the information supplied by you and your husband," he explained to the wife. "Under 'frequency of intercourse,' he listed 'twice a week' while you put down 'several times each night.'"

"That's correct," confirmed the woman, "but please understand it's only a temporary situation—just until we have the down payment for a house."

The elderly Russian tottered to the store to get his family's ration of meat, only to be informed that there was none to be had. Furious, the old man raged at the butcher, cursing the wretched state of affairs, the endless lines, the constant shortages. On his way out of the shop, he was approached by a sinister fellow in dark glasses and a black trench coat. "Be careful, comrade," the man cautioned. "If you had made this kind of disturbance a few years ago, do you know what would have happened to you?" He pointed his index finger at the old man's temple, pulled an imaginary trigger and then walked off.

"What happened, Sergei?" the old man's wife asked, seeing him return empty-handed. "Did they run out of meat again?"

"It's worse than that," he replied glumly. "They've run out of bullets."

THE BEST POSTBOUT JOKE: What did Jesse Jackson say to Mike Tyson after the fight? "No, stupid, an eye for an eye!"

A middle-aged man and woman met, fell in love and got married. On their wedding night they settled into the bridal suite and the wife said to her new husband, "Please promise to be gentle. I'm still a virgin."

"But how can that be?" the startled husband said. "You have been married three times before."

"Well," she explained, "my first husband was a psychiatrist, and all he ever wanted to do was talk about it. My second husband was a gynecologist, and all he ever wanted to do was look at it. And my third husband was a stamp collector, and all he ever wanted to do was—God, I miss him!"

PLAYBOY CLASSIC: Paul got off the elevator on the 40th floor and nervously knocked on his blind date's door. She opened it and was as beautiful and charming as everyone had said. "I'll be ready in a few minutes," she said. "Why don't you play with Rollo while you're waiting? He does wonderful tricks. He rolls over, shakes hands and sits up, and if you make a hoop with your arms, he'll jump through."

The dog followed Paul onto the balcony and started rolling over. Paul made a hoop with his arms and Rollo jumped through—and over the balcony. Just then Paul's date walked out. "Isn't Rollo the cutest, happiest dog you've ever seen?" she gushed.

Paul panicked. "To tell the truth," he said, "he seemed a little depressed to me."

A watermelon farmer was determined to scare off the local kids who went into his watermelon patch every night to eat their fill. After some thought, he made a sign that said WARNING! ONE OF THE WATERMELONS IN THIS FIELD HAS BEEN INJECTED WITH CYANIDE. He smiled smugly as he watched the kids run off the next night without eating any of his melons.

A week later the farmer was surveying his field. To his satisfaction no watermelons were missing, but a sign next to his read NOW THERE ARE TWO!

BUMPER STICKER OF THE MONTH: SO MANY STUPID PEOPLE, SO FEW COMETS.

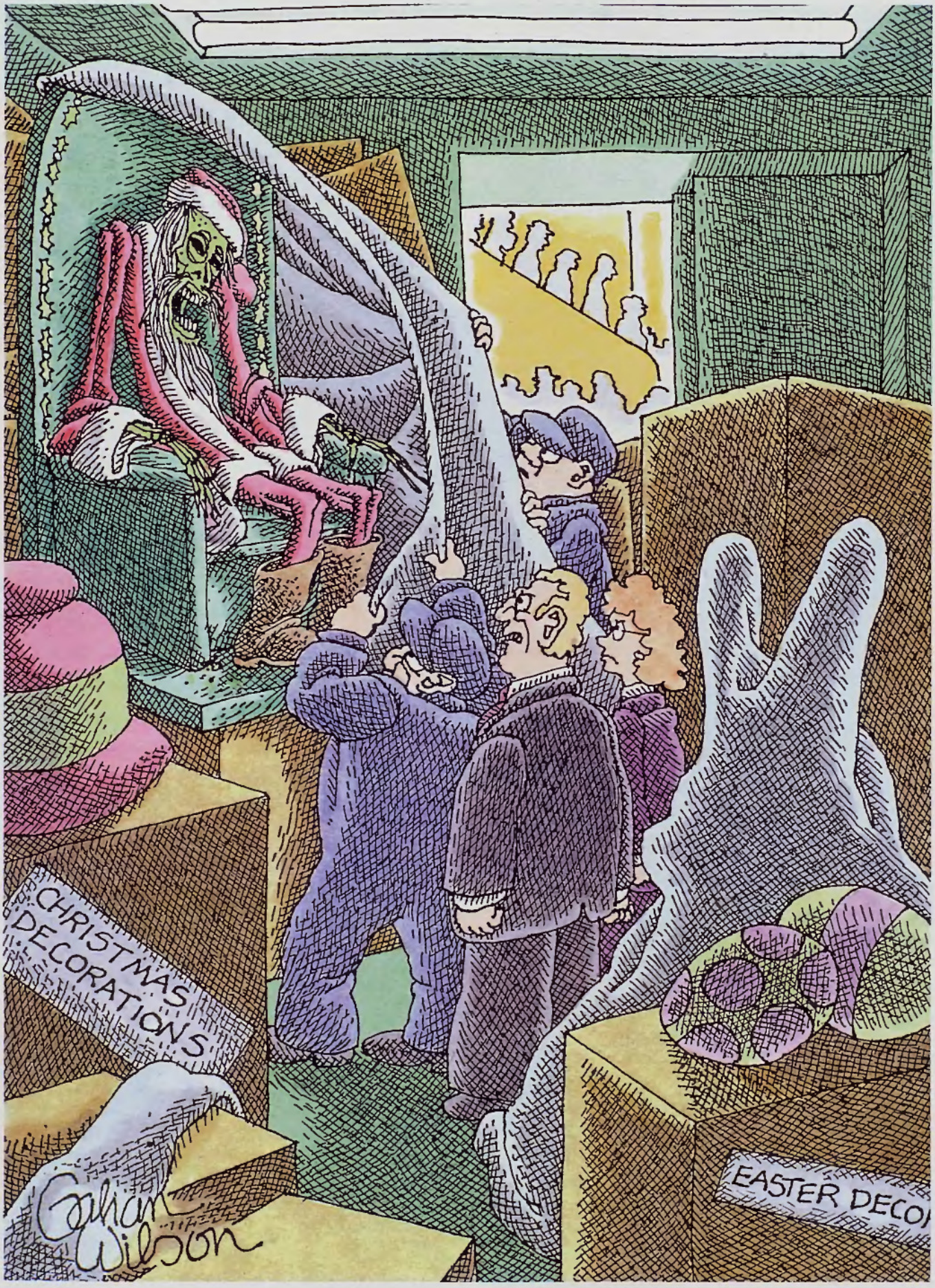
THIS MONTH'S MOST FREQUENT SUBMISSION: God had finished with the basic structure of humanity and was ready to get down to the perks. "OK, kids," he said to Adam and Eve, "you have the essential stuff. Now who wants to be able to pee standing up?"

Adam leaped to his feet. "Me! Let it be me."

"So be it," God intoned.

God then turned to Eve. "Well, let me see," he murmured, looking at his master plan. "Looks like all I have left is multiple orgasms."

Send your jokes on postcards to Party Jokes Editor, PLAYBOY, 680 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60611, or by e-mail to jokes@playboy.com. $100 will be paid to the contributor whose submission is selected. Sorry, jokes cannot be returned.



"Damn—we'll have to hire a new one!"

Midnight clear *(continued from page 80)*

The entrance to Ward Six was an oversized steel door covered with greasy handprints and dried blood.

Freddy asked where Ward Six was located and the short man pointed at the hospital clock tower. "The gray building behind the clock tower," he said. "Jarrad Hall. There's a plaque on the door. If you get to the water tower, you've gone too far. Those two chimneys from the power plant beyond . . . see there? It's the last outpost of civilization. Chinese Turkistan, Outer Mongolia, man. You will never make it back alive."

Freddy nodded his head at the two men. "Gotcha! Good day, gentlemen."

"Come on," Mrs. Gordon said as she plodded on ahead. "If we stand here another minute, I'll die."

"The guy is right, those little tires are ridiculous. I mean, who thought of that? It's not exactly what you call a grand inspiration."

"They were thinking in terms of space saving," Mrs. Gordon said. "Cargo space. If you want to transport dope, a dead body or something, there's more room."

"Yes, of course, but what stupid, fucking goddamn assholes they are just the same. The empire is in terminal decline."

"You have the foulest mouth of anyone alive," Mrs. Gordon said.

Freddy looked at her sharply. "I traverse hell on a daily basis. I'm known for my poignant effusions. To imagine that any human escapade could turn out well seems unthinkable to me, but this trip, Iona? Oh, do forgive me! You know I have a perception of things very few can endure. I will abstain from burrowing any further into my fourth dimension of despair except to say that this very planet has gangrene."

"The earth has gangrene," she said. "It's not paradise. Not by a long shot."

The pair followed the walkway around the clock tower and reached a gray building with locked doors. Freddy bolted ahead until he came upon the water tower. He turned around and ran back to his stepmother. "We're lost. I don't know what to do. I haven't even got a plan." He pulled off his coat and put it over his head like a blanket. They stood together shivering for a moment until a maintenance worker driving a snowplow stopped and gave them a lift back. He pulled a key ring from his belt, unlocked the door and let them inside.

The lobby was dark and empty, but it was warm. Freddy kicked off his loafers and began to rub his feet in a savage fashion. "Son of a bitch, it's cold!"

Mrs. Gordon blew on her hands and rubbed her face. "Oh God!" she said. "That was absolute hell!"

"Changing that tire. Shit! Goddamn motherfucker! Why was I born?"

"You were born because your dad screwed a bimbo," Mrs. Gordon said. "And now that you're here, you just have to make the best of it, like all the rest. Don't think of the philosophical implications."

Mrs. Gordon sat on a narrow bench next to Freddy and had begun to rub her own feet when a voice rattled over the intercom. "Please step forward and state your business."

Freddy spotted a small TV camera just above the intercom speaker. He moved before it and said, "Dr. Frederick Blaine here to see Eustace Elliot Eckstrom."

Freddy heard someone giggling in the background. The same voice pitched an octave lower said, "Eckstrom, Eustace, joost von moment. Ees he yah patient, doc-taw?"

"He's my relative!"

Mrs. Gordon clutched her body under her coat. "I'm frozen down to the core level," she said. "How do penguins take it?"

"I don't know. They have antifreeze in their blood. Maybe they hate their lives." Freddy peered through the metal mesh gate that bisected the lobby. "I'm not kidding, if I could push a button and never have been born, I'd push. The deal is this: We are in hell. It's just that they call it earth. If they just called it hell, it would make more sense."

"People could take it better if the right information were put out," Mrs. Gordon said. "I agree with that. Calling it earth is propaganda. Chinese Communist bullshit."

The intercom crackled. "Dot's Ward Six, duke-tor. I wan' you an' the little lady to prozeed down zee 'all to elevator C and take her to d' t'oid floor. How's zat sound to y'all?"

"That's peachy, sir," Freddy said. "That's dandy! We're coming. We're on our way. So look out."

A buzzer sounded and the iron gate slid open. Assaulted by a variety of indefinable but powerful odors, they followed the buffed terrazzo hall to elevator C.

The entrance to Ward Six was an oversize steel door painted with shiny white enamel but covered with greasy handprints, dried blood, snot, scuff marks and indentations that made it look like a guardrail at the Indy 500. Freddy pointed them out. "Look at that! The Incredible Hulk. After his TV series bombed, they sent him here."

"He's in there with green skin and a bad temper," Mrs. Gordon said. "We were fools to come."

Freddy smiled. "Think *hell* and it will all approximate fun."

Mrs. Gordon checked her lipstick in a cosmetic mirror, "H-E double hockey sticks."

Freddy rang the buzzer, then cupped his hands to peer through the thick yellow Plexiglas window of the door. A lanky orderly in a white uniform was seated at the charge desk reading a paperback copy of *The Sea Wolf*, by Jack London. He had a short black beard and long hair and his reading glasses were attached around his neck by a lanyard. Freddy watched him take off his glasses, set the book down and remove a large brass key from his belt. The man wore a name tag that read STEPHENS. He opened the door and said, "Evening visiting hours are over at 5:30."

Freddy flashed his hospital identification and Stephens waved the couple inside. Stephens went back to his desk and returned to his book. Freddy asked where Cousin Eustace could be located and, without looking up, Stephens adjusted his glasses and pointed to the back of the ward.

A group of patients watching TV turned toward the door to see what was going on. They did not look nearly as crazy as Mrs. Gordon had imagined. In fact, they looked pretty normal. In a moment they turned back to the television, where Christopher Walken was doing a song and dance routine with elves and a snowman. Suddenly the biggest woman Mrs. Gordon had ever seen got up from a large chair and began to bear down on her.

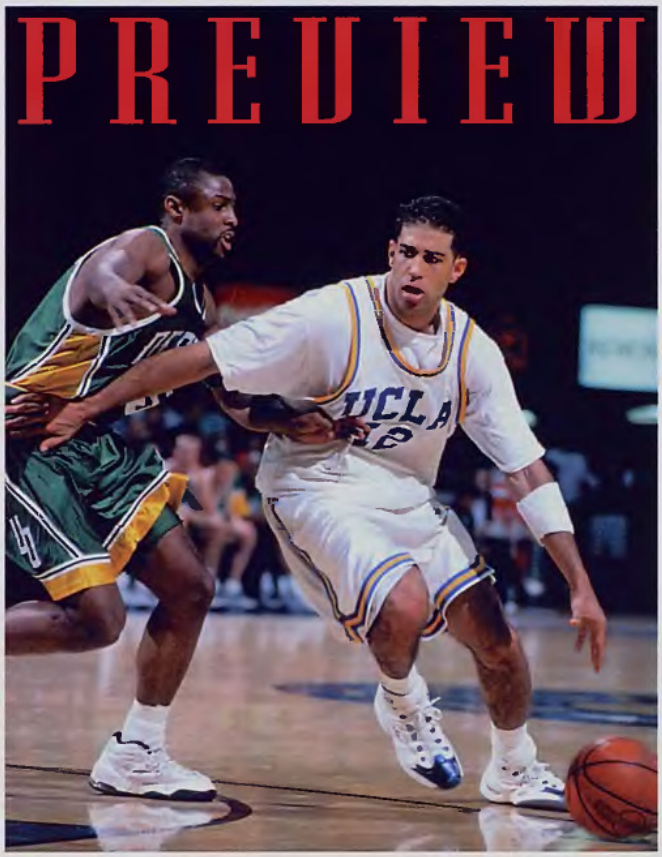
Orderly Stephens jumped up from the desk, pointing a finger at the woman. In an even tone he said, "Stop it right there, Marla! I'm in no mood for fucking bullshit today. So just cool your jets!" Stephens sat down and bent back the spine of his paperback, waiting for Marla to comply.

Mrs. Gordon smiled nervously, hiding behind Stephens and Freddy. Not only was Marla tall, everything about her was large. She had enormous shoulders, huge hands and big legs. She had coarse facial features. Her teeth were large, but they were regular. Her hair was black and cut at shoulder length. She wore a plain black dress

(continued on page 195)

PLAYBOY'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL PREVIEW

IN TODAY'S COLLEGE GAME, YOU'RE EITHER QUICK OR YOU'RE DEAD



Toby Bailey and the UCLA Bruins will have to outrun defending champ Arizona to win the national title.

THERE'S a sign on I-65 just north of Indianapolis that warns SPEED KILLS. Unfortunately, it was missed by the players and coaches of North Carolina and Kentucky as they headed to the Final Four. Front-runner Kansas and Providence never saw it either. Wouldn't have helped if they had, because speed is tough to defend against, and hotshot Arizona couldn't have had more if Sandra Bullock were on the roster.

So now everyone is scouting for speed. Forget the big man. There aren't any great ones around the college game now anyway. Push the ball, play full-court pressure defense, shoot the three and run, run, run.

However, speed—as in a fast break to the NBA—also threatens the game's health. Eighteen young men with college eligibility left on the meter jumped to the pros; one high school honcho, Tracy McGrady, decided to skip the college experience altogether. In a world where so many of today's college hoops stars have as much interest in getting an education as Chris Farley does in health food, McGrady is, if nothing else, honest. If a young man is superbly talented at hoops but has zero interest in education, perhaps he is better off attending the University of Nike Basketball Camp and taking a straight shot at the NBA instead of going through the sham and deception of enrolling in college. In the end, the college game is better off without him.

Now let's jump off the soapbox and run down the 50 best teams for the coming season.

(1) UCLA

Many basketball fans didn't agree with UCLA's dismissal of coach Jim Harrick for alleged expense-account irregularities. Even more questioned the naming of 32-year-old Steve Lavin, a full-time assistant for only two years, to take the coaching reins once held by the legendary John Wooden. Lavin himself must have had similar thoughts on January 9, 1997 after UCLA absorbed a shocking 109–61 drubbing by Stanford, the worst defeat in school history. But Wooden called in his vote of confidence, the players rallied behind Lavin and when UCLA played the Cardinals again, the Bruins not only avenged the loss but also started a 12-game winning streak that finally ended with a loss to Minnesota in the Midwest Regional One Finals. Lavin has lost Charles O'Bannon and Cameron Dollar to graduation, but he's recruited stellar talent to join returning starters J.R. Henderson, Jelani McCoy and Toby Bailey. The most highly touted of the new recruits are Baron Davis, the number one high school point guard in the nation last year, and Schea Cotton, a solid top ten prospect. If Lavin can meld the talent, experience and youth, UCLA could rival any team in the nation.

(2) DUKE

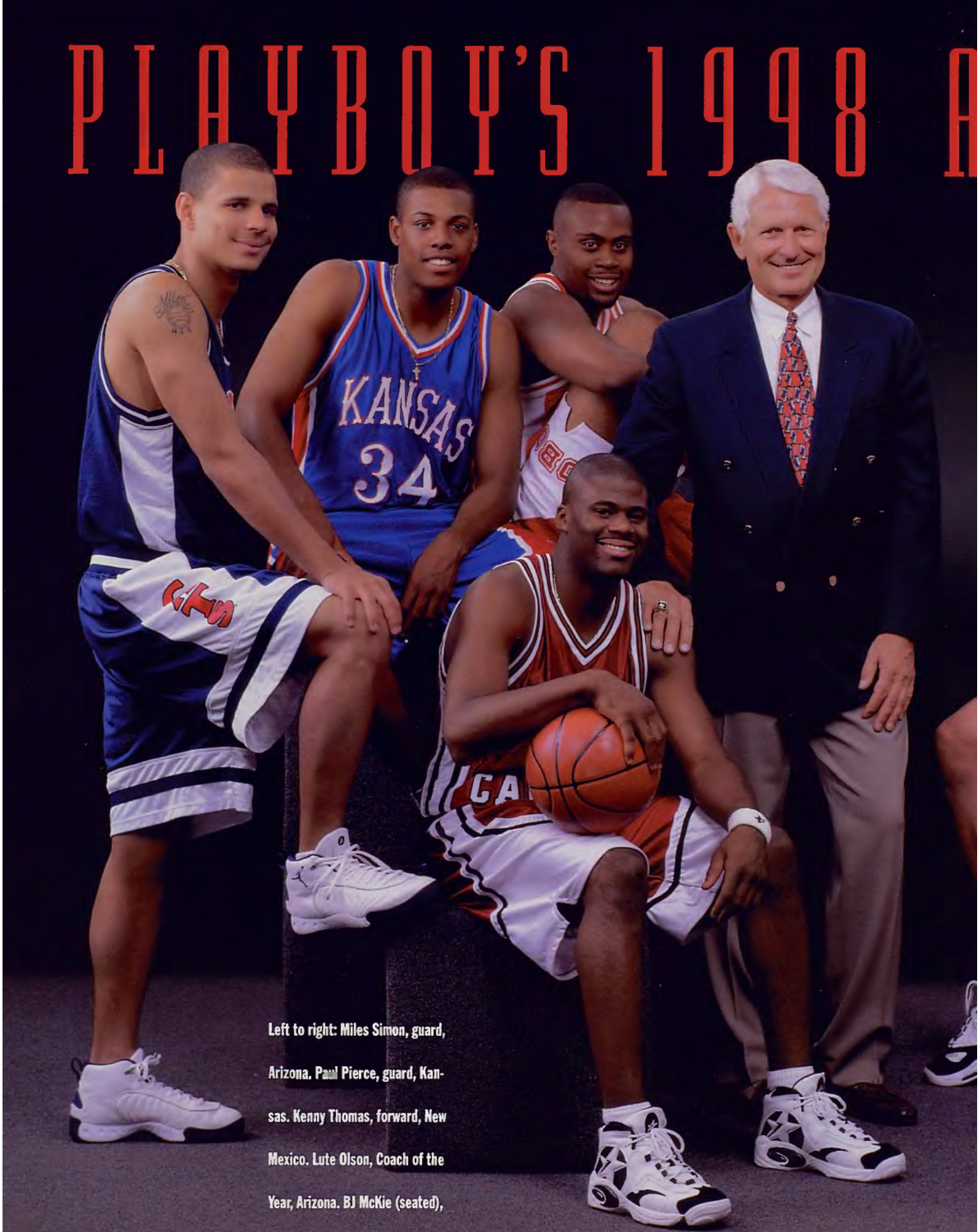
Coach Mike Krzyzewski is all smiles. He has four starters returning from a 24-win season and one of his best recruiting classes. Four recruits—6'8" forwards Elton Brand and Shane Battier, 6'11" center Chris Burgess and guard William Avery—were top 15 high school prospects. Returning starting guard Trajan Langdon (14.3 points per game) is ready to blossom into one of college basketball's superstars, while seniors Steve Wojciechowski and Roshown McLeod give the Blue Devils experience to go with their awesome talent. Coach K could still be smiling in San Antonio.

(3) NORTH CAROLINA

Evidently Dean Smith has learned a few things in his 36-year stint as head coach of the Tar Heels. He had one of his best seasons last year, coaxing a group of talented but largely inexperienced players through a dreadful early

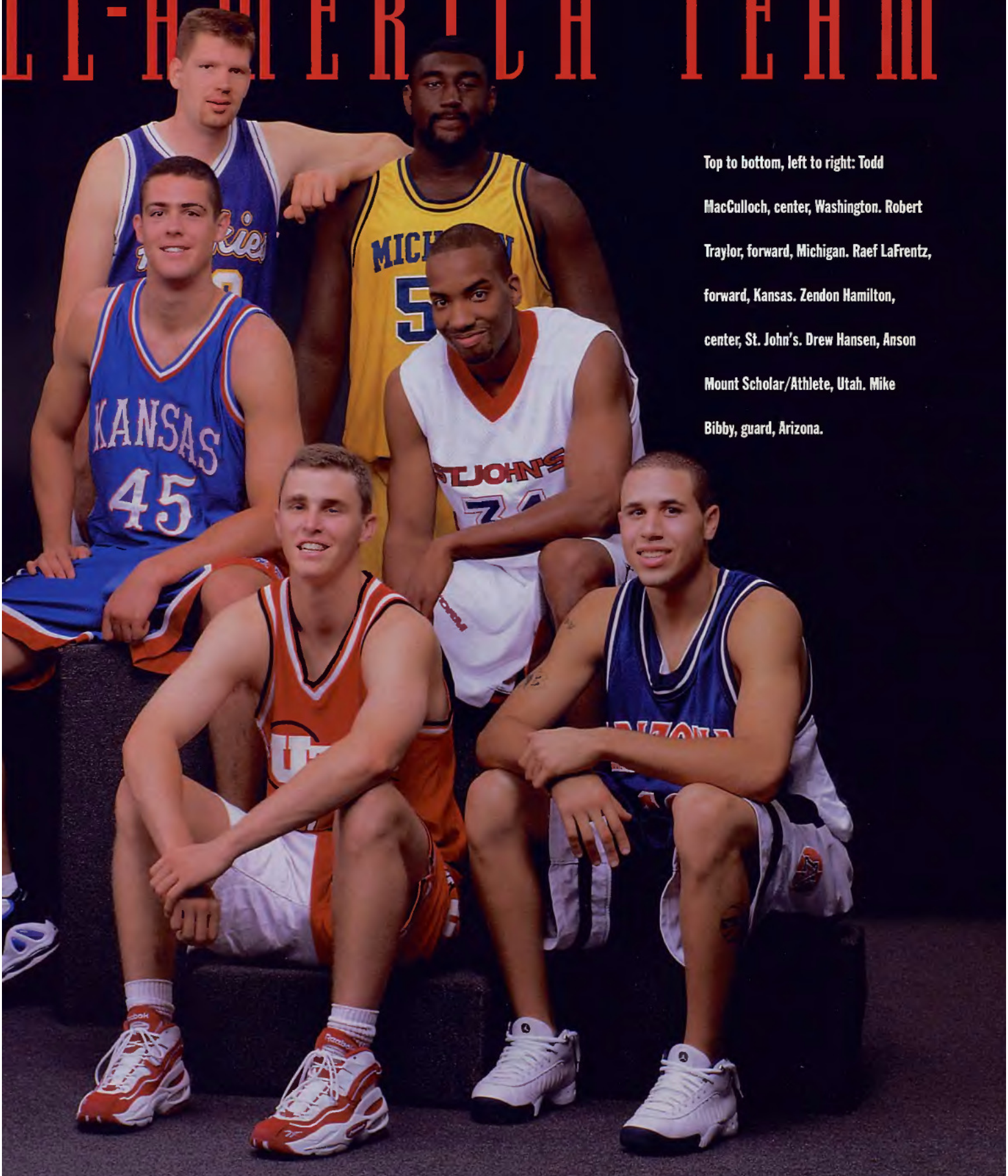
SPORTS BY GARY COLE

PLAYBOY'S 1998 A



Left to right: Miles Simon, guard, Arizona. Paul Pierce, guard, Kansas. Kenny Thomas, forward, New Mexico. Lute Olson, Coach of the Year, Arizona. BJ McKie (seated), guard, South Carolina.

LL-AMERICA TEAM



Top to bottom, left to right: Todd MacCulloch, center, Washington. Robert Traylor, forward, Michigan. Raef LaFrentz, forward, Kansas. Zendon Hamilton, center, St. John's. Drew Hansen, Anson Mount Scholar/Athlete, Utah. Mike Bibby, guard, Arizona.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD IZUI

Playboy's TOP 25

1. UCLA
2. DUKE
3. NORTH CAROLINA
4. ARIZONA
5. KANSAS
6. PURDUE
7. FRESNO STATE
8. MINNESOTA
9. MICHIGAN
10. KENTUCKY
11. XAVIER
12. CLEMSON
13. ST. JOHN'S
14. HAWAII
15. MARYLAND
16. MISSISSIPPI
17. SYRACUSE
18. IOWA
19. ARKANSAS
20. GEORGIA
21. TEMPLE
22. STANFORD
23. UNC—CHARLOTTE
24. ST. JOSEPH'S
25. MARQUETTE

POSSIBLE BREAKTHROUGHS

Valparaiso, Connecticut, Louisville, Utah, Illinois State, Cincinnati, Illinois, Florida State, Texas, Indiana, South Carolina, Princeton, Butler, Wisconsin, George Washington

FOR A COMPLETE CONFERENCE-BY-CONFERENCE PREDICTION OF FINAL STANDINGS, SEE PAGES 192–193.

season all the way to an ACC tourney championship and the NCAA semifinals, where they lost to Arizona 66–58. The only starter gone from Smith's squad is 7'3" Serge Zwikker, making this year's team smaller but quicker. Playboy All-America Antawn Jamison is a 6'9" Michael Jordan wannabe who averaged more than 19 points per game last year. Shammond Williams and Vince Carter should sparkle this season after solid performances last year. Picture Smith and the Tar Heels in yet another Final Four.

(4) ARIZONA

Basketball Prognostication 101: If a team wins the national championship and returns all five starters plus a generous selection of backups, why would it not be the favorite to repeat? Because there's nothing harder to do these days than repeat an NCAA basketball championship, particularly for players who must deal with the hype and media pressure that starts with the opening tip of the first game. However, the Wildcats have the perfect coach to guide them back to the top, Playboy Coach of the Year Lute Olson. He's cool, he's collected, he's disciplined. And there's no question about Arizona's talent. Playboy All-America Miles Simon, whose ball-hugging smile may have been the best PR for college basketball since Michael Jordan's jump shot, is a great floor leader. Backcourt partner Playboy All-America Mike Bibby, so good but still developing, is quick to the paint and deadly from the perimeter. Michael Dickerson and Bennett Davison combine for points and rebounds. Will Arizona repeat? It could, but it probably won't.

(5) KANSAS

There's no question Kansas had the nation's best college basketball team last season. Scot Pollard played the enforcer, Jacque Vaughn (once he recovered from a wrist injury) was the experienced floor general and Playboy All-America Paul Pierce showed tremendous athleticism at both ends of the floor. And then there was Playboy All-America Raef LaFrentz, ready to carry his team when everyone else went cold. With high-caliber coach Roy Williams on the bench, what could go wrong? The Jayhawks were unlucky to go cold against red-hot Arizona on the night when it mattered most. LaFrentz and Pierce return this season. Ryan Robertson is nearly as good as Vaughn. Two McDonald's All-Americans, guard Kenny Gregory and 7'1" center Eric Chenowith, will become part of the mix. The Jayhawks may not be quite so good as last season, but perhaps they'll be luckier.

(6) PURDUE

No team more consistently outperforms preseason predictions than Purdue. That's because prognosticators have been slow to recognize the genius of coach Gene Keady, who can build a championship program even with scarce talent. That won't be the case this season because Keady has as much, or more, talent to work with as any coach in the conference. His two best players are Brad Miller, a 6'11" senior who plays both forward and center, and guard Chad Austin, an 1100-point scorer in just three seasons. In addition, Keady has his usual assortment of beefy rebounders, three-point artists and defensive specialists. A trip to the Final Four would catapult Keady to national prominence.

(7) FRESNO STATE

No team has more pure talent potential this season than Fresno State. Controversial coach Jerry Tarkanian, once the "Jaws" of UNLV's high-profile program, welcomes back Chris Herren, an outstanding guard who averaged 17.5 points per game, and forward Daymond Forney (14.2 ppg). Herren started his collegiate career at Boston College, Forney in junior college. Then there are 6'8" Tremaine Fowlkes, a transfer from Cal; 6'8" Larry Abney, a junior college transfer; Avondre Jones, a transfer from USC; and Winfred Walton, who was penciled onto Jim Boeheim's roster at Syracuse before he failed freshman eligibility requirements. If Tark can keep his players eligible and get them to play together, the Bulldogs could be as good as any team in the nation.

(8) MINNESOTA

The Golden Gophers dominated the Big Ten race last season (16–2) and then battled all the way to the Final Four before falling to Kentucky (78–69) in the semifinals. For 11-year coach Clem Haskins, it was a fulfilling journey. Haskins has lots of talent returning from last year's team, but he has the difficult job of replacing graduated team leader Bobby Jackson and Courtney James (who will play ball in Europe). That mantle will undoubtedly fall to seniors Sam Jacobson and Eric Harris.

(9) MICHIGAN

The Wolverines will try to use last year's NIT championship as a springboard to success in the NCAA tourney this year. However, they'll have to make the jump without 6'9" forward Maurice Taylor, who skipped his final year to become the 14th pick in the NBA draft. That still leaves coach Steve Fisher with

(continued on page 184)

"Come in, come in! Our traditional lighting of the undergarments has just begun!"

AMERICA'S MOST INFLUENTIAL ALTERNATIVE MEDIC TELLS YOU THE TRUTH ABOUT MEN AND HEALTH

By DAVID SHEFF

PLAYBOY PROFILE

DR. WEIL'S RX FOR GUYS

Andrew Weil, the controversial M.D. who prescribes herbs, pollens and a wide range of alternative therapies, wants to help. He is inundated with appeals for medical advice—sometimes thousands a day, delivered via mail, phone calls and e-mail. His books are best-sellers. His seventh and most recent, *8 Weeks to Optimum Health*, is a prescription for mental, spiritual and physical changes. It put him on the cover of *Time*. He lectures, does PBS specials and has a flooded Web site on the Internet—Ask Dr. Weil (www.drweil.com) receives 2 million hits a month. But still he has a problem. His message has been slow to catch on with the half of the population that may need him most: men.

Weil, 55, is the founder of the Center for Integrative Medicine at the University of Arizona Medical School in Tucson. A Harvard graduate with degrees in medicine and ethnobotany, Weil eschewed a traditional medical practice and took off for South America, Asia and India, where he studied with shamans, herbalists and osteopaths. Unlike most alternative medicine gurus, however, Weil also refers to conventional medicine when needed. But he is still criticized by many doctors for prescribing drugs and therapies that haven't been tested or approved by the Food and Drug Administration. He has millions of admirers who are now swallowing herbs such as ho shou wu and ashwaganda, bypassing filets mignon for soybeans, and even having their skulls massaged. Weird stuff, but many people say it works. Some claim it has saved their lives.

PLAYBOY: Are men and women equally skeptical about alternative medicine?

WEIL: Men are more likely to dismiss it.

PLAYBOY: Is it that men simply require more proof?

WEIL: I don't know, but men are more resistant. In general, they're much less likely to ask for help in matters of health. I'm not sure if there is some correlation between men not being willing to ask for directions when they're lost and their not wanting to go to health professionals if they have symptoms, but there may be. I know they're more likely to deny what's going on.

PLAYBOY: Do men have a less healthy lifestyle than women?

WEIL: Definitely. They are more likely to be stuck in unhealthy patterns of eating and stress. They are subject to particular kinds of stress that women aren't: the need to perform, achieve, compete in the workplace. Women have more of it than they used to, but men still have the most. Men even exercise in ways that can be damaging.

PLAYBOY: We thought exercise was good.

WEIL: But a lot of men get caught up in forms of exercise that aren't good for them. They push themselves too hard and damage themselves. It's common. Men are often very athletic in the early part of their lives and then become sedentary in middle age because they did too much damage. For example, they run and ignore pain in their knees until they can't run at all. It's much better to have moderate habits of exercise that hold up into old age. It's important that men learn to listen to their bodies. When you exercise, don't ignore pain. Men may dismiss walking as a wimpy form of exercise, but it is excellent.

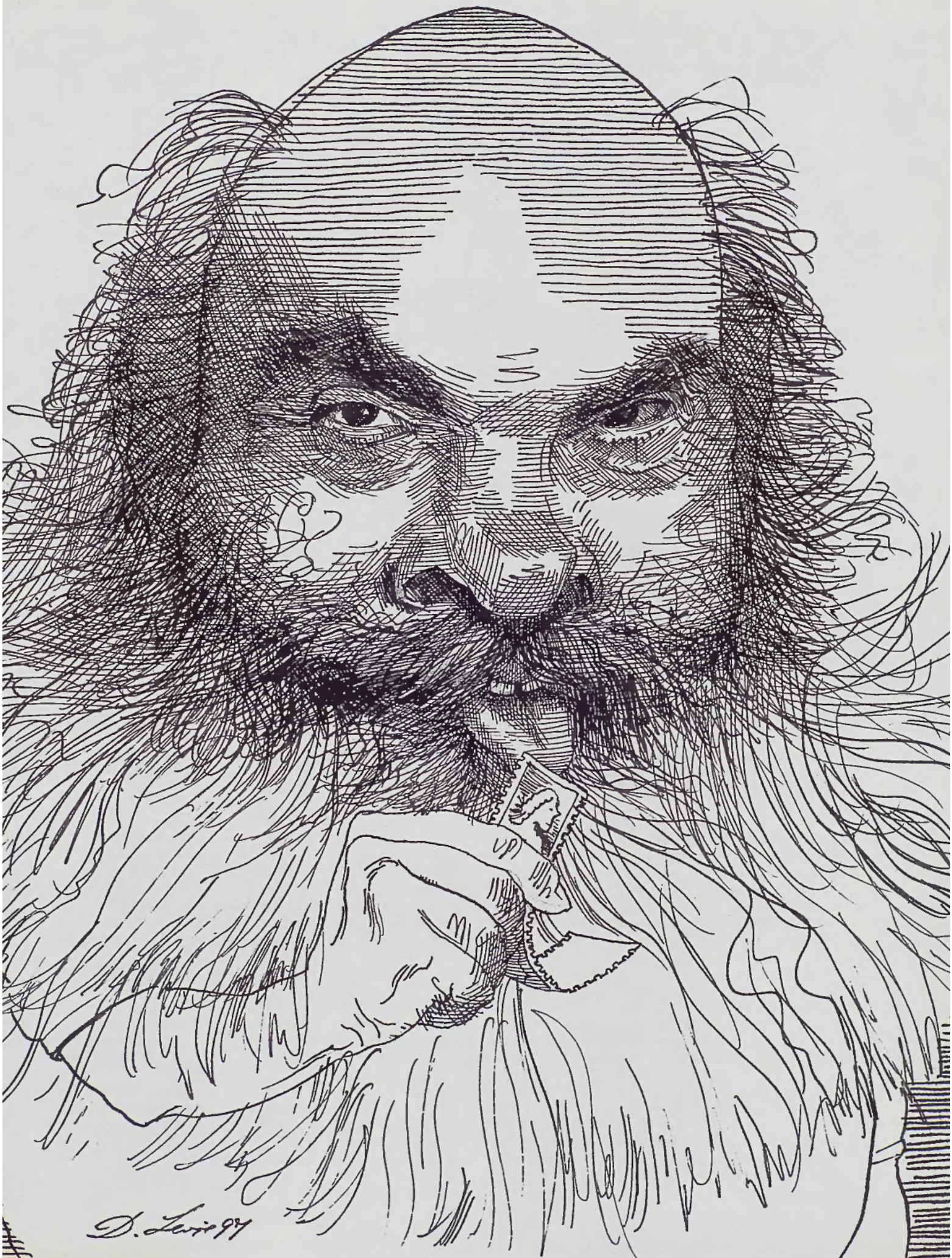
PLAYBOY: Are intensive workouts good if we keep them up?

WEIL: It depends. It's clear that for many people who go to fitness clubs it's all about appearance, about attractiveness. That should not be the primary reason for exercise, though I recognize that it can be a motivator. But if they are exercising for reasons of vanity and not health, they could actually harm themselves.

PLAYBOY: How do you feel about the workouts men are doing to produce washboard stomachs?

WEIL: First of all, that can dissolve instantly if you stop doing it. It's not real change in the body; it's not rooted in anything physiological. Washboard stomachs aren't something to strive for. Sure, they look good on slick magazine paper and the TV screen, but they're not healthy. A flat abdomen with tight, rippling muscles will restrict the motion of the intestines during digestion. It will also crimp the action of the diaphragm, which of course needs to move easily for you to breathe. It's OK to be trim, but the well-toned abdomen

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID LEVINE


D. Levine 97

should be yielding, not rigid. Abdominal crunches in moderation can be helpful. They can strengthen the back as well as the abdominal muscles. They're a good antidote to back pain because they balance and tone the muscles that support the spine. And they may help some people shape their midsections. You don't need to buy an expensive apparatus to work your abdominal muscles—your basic stomach crunch will do. Lie on the floor with knees bent, palms on your legs or on the floor, and your feet comfortably apart. Keep your chin up, focus your eyes on the ceiling and curl your body forward until your shoulders are a few inches off the floor. Hold and repeat. And keep breathing. Remember: Spot reduction isn't the answer, whether you use those devices or not. The secrets to losing weight won't cost you anything: Eat less (especially less fat), change your diet, get regular aerobic exercise. If you want to crunch your abs, that's great, too.

PLAYBOY: How good are Stair Master, Nautilus machines and all that time at the gym?

WEIL: Used wisely, they can be fine. When the weather is bad and I can't bicycle or walk, I use the Stair Master. But if I go to a club, I see people, especially women, working out on Stair Masters like madwomen. There's a certain grim look about them that doesn't look healthy to me. It's much better if you can find something fun and easy that you can incorporate into your life. Most very healthy old people didn't do intensive workouts. They were moderately and sensibly active throughout their lives.

PLAYBOY: But we also hear about some of the oldest and healthiest people who smoked, drank, had diets you would disapprove of and didn't exercise.

WEIL: Overriding everything may be something we rarely consider: the social connectedness that we don't have in our culture. One of the most unhealthful things in modern America is our increasing social isolation. Community connectedness is protective against ill health. A study looked at a community of Italians in Pennsylvania, in which the older generation had very low rates of heart disease, though they were smoking and eating a lot of meat. The younger generation had heart disease rates that are comparable to those of other Americans. The main thing that changed was the loss of the community. The younger generation lived in nuclear families, isolated from one another.

PLAYBOY: Hasn't feminism managed to close the gap between men and women, particularly regarding stress? Why are men more susceptible to stress-related illness?

WEIL: Men in our culture have shorter life spans than women do, and they're more prone to violence, accidents and heart attacks. Men tend to ignore emotional problems and are unlikely to ask for help. Men tend to be stuck in bad diets and are less likely than women to eat enough fruits and vegetables. They still die younger.

PLAYBOY: That's cheerful.

WEIL: Men can change. I suggest they look at their lives carefully. They should consider the sources of stress that have to do with being a man. Do they feel compelled to achieve? Are they the sole wage earner in the family? Is it difficult for them to express their feelings? I recommend individual or group psychotherapy to help them know and express their feelings. Many men have difficulty controlling anger. Yoga may help some men. Anger expressed outwardly and anger turned inward can both be destructive to the body. There's increasing evidence that anger can put you at risk for coronary heart disease and sudden death, especially men. Studies on the hard-driving type-A personality found that high energy and ambition weren't the key factors in determining a high risk for heart attacks. Instead, they were type-A characteristics combined with anger.

PLAYBOY: Monks in monasteries may not get angry, but that's not the real world.

WEIL: So it becomes a question of how you handle anger. As a man becomes conscious of his anger, he should begin to distinguish between the mildly annoying and the infuriating. With the things that anger you most, try to figure out what they're really about: Are you feeling powerless? Guilty? Once you've learned to recognize anger and identify its roots, it will be easier to express it constructively and lessen it.

PLAYBOY: Lessen it how?

WEIL: Just being aware of what causes it can help. Also, you can learn other ways to communicate your emotions. It's important to learn to say exactly what you're feeling and why, rather than just lashing out. The goal isn't to suppress your anger but to express it in a nonaggressive way. Psychotherapy, hypnotherapy and counseling can all be useful. Exercise is also an excellent way to cope with stress. Studies have found physical activity eases anger and tension. Meditation, relaxation and breathing techniques help a lot. Also, since isolation can increase feelings of anger and often leads to substance abuse and general ill health, men should work hard to develop meaningful connections with their families and friends. Finally, of course, is diet. There's no getting around it. Meat and cheese are key to the Western diet, but they are very bad. The prescriptions are obvious: Eat lots of fruits and vegetables, fish and whole grains, and have lots of variety.

PLAYBOY: Are there other for-men-only prescriptions?

WEIL: Men should be careful with dietary supplements. If they take a multivitamin, it shouldn't contain iron. Men can't eliminate iron except through the loss of blood, and too much iron may promote cardiovascular disease and cancer.

PLAYBOY: How does male sexual dysfunction relate to physical health?

WEIL: Sexuality is a reflection of one's general state of health, and it can be used to monitor both mental and physical well-being. It's an area in which many physicians are not well trained. Most doctors aren't very comfortable with taking sexual histories from people or giving them advice about sexuality. It's an area where there's a lot of room for improvement.

PLAYBOY: We're all ears. How do you approach sex differently?

WEIL: I've looked at a lot of herbal and natural approaches to enhancing sexuality in men.

PLAYBOY: You mean aphrodisiacs?

WEIL: Yes.

PLAYBOY: Everyone has heard tales of aphrodisiacs, but we've always assumed they don't really work. First, what about Spanish fly?

WEIL: It's actually a beetle. It's a strong irritant of the genital and urinary system; it causes inflammation of the lower urinary tract, which can lead to erection and sexual excitement. But it's dangerous and not the way to go.

PLAYBOY: What are safer choices?

WEIL: Asian ginseng and ashwaganda, two tonics described in my books, are especially useful for men. They make men more interested in sex, bring increased erections and prolong the duration of erections. They make for more satisfying sexuality. I mean, there's a lot of stuff out there. It's not even clear why they work. They may work on hormonal pathways. They are having specific effects on sexual physiology.

PLAYBOY: Exactly how?

WEIL: The compounds in ginseng, called ginsenosides, are known to increase resistance to stress, improve hormonal balance, benefit metabolism and aid skin and muscle tone. I recommend an extract in capsule or liquid form that has been standardized for ginsenoside content. Oriental ginseng is a stimulant, so use it with caution, if at all, if you have high blood pressure, insomnia or anxiety.

PLAYBOY: What is ashwaganda?

(continued on page 158)

On March 31, 1978, Candy Loving marched into a Norman, Oklahoma Ramada Inn to meet PLAYBOY's photo editors for the 25th Anniversary Playmate Hunt. Yes, she was gorgeous. But it was her down-home charm (she ordered chocolate milk instead of coffee and talked about her family) that caught our eye. Fast as you

Our favorite confection wos the 25th Anniversary Ploymate in 1979 (above) and all we wanted for Christmas (right) in 1980.

PLAYMATE REVISITED: CANDY LOVING

two decades later, the title "playmate perfect" still applies

Cut to two decades later: Modern-day Condy (above, with her husband and three-year-old daughter) hasn't changed a bit. "Not true," she recently said with a laugh. "When my daughter noticed the framed PLAYBOY cover on our wall she said, 'Mommy, that's you—with brown hair!' It was really sweet!" And so, Candy, are you.

could say "small town," the girl from Ponca City, Oklahoma with no modeling experience was named the 25th Anniversary Playmate. We called her "Playmate Perfect." You can see why. Today, Candy is a businesswoman who looks back fondly on what she calls "the PLAYBOY years. I learned so much traveling around the country to promote the magazine—confidence, diplomacy, how to deal with people. What propelled me out of Oklahoma has made me grounded. It's been wonderful."

CELEBRITY *Christmas Carols*

HUMOR BY ROBERT S. WIEDER

Joseph Kennedy II

(To the tune of *O Christmas Tree*)

O Kennedy, O Kennedy
That name was not so good to me.
With "Kennedy" publicity
Like I had, who needs enemies?
[Chorus]
My ex on talk shows called me scum,
My brother's girlfriend sucked her thumb.
John John posed nude and then dissed *me*—
My Christmas wish? "Joe Smith" to be.

Ellen DeGeneres

(To the tune of *Hark! the Herald Angels Sing*)

Hark! the herald angels sing,
What I did was no big thing.
Role and person reconciled,
Sorry if it got you riled.
Call it noble, call it twisted,
Here's the point (you've clearly missed it):
I'm no rebel, let me say,
But if it boosts ratings, yep, I'm gay.

Chelsea Clinton

(To the tune of *Away in a Manger*)

Away from "the manger,"
The White House, the folks,
The SS and press corps,
All killing my hopes.

Just college men here, to make
My Christmas dream:
To fill more than my stocking,
If you know what I mean.

Martha Stewart

(To the tune of *I'll Be Home for Christmas*)

I will hone your Christmas,
Watch and learn from me:
I'll cook gourmet, build my own sleigh,
And do heart surgery.

I'll design a sailboat,
Write a book or two;
I'll tend my flocks, and cure the pox,
And look great all day through.

My life is perfection.
That's why it's for sale
Through TV shows, books, videos;
Put that check in the mail.

I'm worth many millions.
If you aren't, that means
Martha Stewart Living
Is only in your dreams.

Eddie Murphy

(To the tune of *Deck the Halls*)

Deck the halls with boughs of holly,
Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la.
Whoa, check out the balls on Molly!
Ooh-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la.
Donnie's now in gay apparel,
Tra-la-la, la-la-la, la-la-la.
Take him driving at your peril:
Trouble with the la-la-la-la-law.

Fred Thompson

(To the tune of *Angels We Have Heard on High*)
Hearings we have held on high,
New disclosures every week
Put me in the public's eye,
But also put that eye to sleep.
[Chorus]
Bo-O-o-o-o-o—O-o-o-o-o—O-o-o-o-o-ring
Months of testimony,
Bo-O-o-o-o-o—O-o-o-o-o—O-o-o-o-o-ring
Just proved we're all phony
Schmucks.

Susan Molinari (and Bill Paxton)

(To the tune of *O Little Town of Bethlehem*)
O little town of Washington, you must think we're both nuts.
Once power-circle congressmates, we're now out on our butts.
The highest-ranking woman, Sue left for network news;
Bill got the boot from Speaker Newt for one too many coups.

But Sue gets prime exposure being perky on TV
And Bill's stock's even higher now that he's "Newt's enemy."
As "rebels" and "outsiders," D.C. thinks we've gone astray;
But if the public buys it, we could run this town someday.

Tiger Woods

(To the tune of *God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen*)

God bless ye, Asian gentlemen,

And white and black ones, too.

I'm golf's crown prince, and by bloodlines

I'm kin to all of you.

That's why they pay me $40 mil

Just to endorse a shoe!

Every tie-in brings me comfort and joy,

Comfort and joy,

And to Fuzzy Zoeller, "Season's greetings, *boy*."

Dr. Laura Schlessinger

(To the tune of *Santa Claus is Coming to Town*)
You better not pout, you better not cry,
She'll pimp-slap your ego—and worse, if you lie.
Doctor Laura's on in your town.

She tells you "Grow Up!" and "No sex till you're wed!"
And if you dare argue, "You're hopeless—drop dead!"
Doctor Laura's on in your town.
[Chorus]
She spits at self-indulgence, she's pity's enemy.
You're sick and broke at Christmas? "Take responsibility!"

She's heard nationwide, you can't get away,
Just give thanks she's not part of your holiday.
Doctor Laura's on in your town.
[Chorus]
She sees through your excuses, she sneers at alibis:
"Take blame for *your* abuses—don't try to rationalize!"

She's in every home, she exposes all flaws,
Sort of a puritan, mean anti-Claus.
Doctor Laura's on in your town.

James Riady, John Huang, Charlie Trie

(To the tune of *We Three Kings*)
We three kings of Orient are
Bearing cash from donors afar:
Bankers, Buddhists,
We'd shake down nudists,
Just grant us immunity.
[Chorus]
Ohhh-hhh . . .
Buying favors, opening doors.
Don't blame us, the rules are yours.
If you hate it, *you* abate it:
Stop electing hacks and whores.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOE CIARDIELLO

Yule Togs

strike a balance between stuffy and scruffy

These are pictures from a fashion shoot. The presents weren't real, the champagne wasn't exactly flowing and the photos were taken in late summer. However, something more than the shutter clicked—our boys and girls really hit it off. When they're comfortable in their clothes, people connect. Wear Timberlands and jeans to a holiday blast featuring caviar blini and bubbly, and you'll be the first to leave. Thankfully, today's new dress-up code goes both ways. With mod stretch suits that have a touch of velvet and with shirts that have a bit of shine, you'll be cooler than the year's first snow. But if you doubt the effect that fine clothes have on beautiful women, just remember: The camera never lies.

fashion by HOLLIS WAYNE

Look slick standing tall or on bended knee. The toaster on the far left wears a single-breasted suit ($695) by DKNY. It's made with a stretch nylon blend. The cotton shirt ($67) and antique velvet tie ($47) are also by DKNY. His boots ($185) by Kenneth Cole zip on the side. The supplicant at near left wears a double-breasted velvet jacket ($700) and matching trou ($250) by PS Paul Smith. The cotton stretch shirt with French cuffs ($350), by John Bartlett, goes nicely with a jacquard tie ($98) by Prada. The lace-up shoes ($150) are by Kenneth Cole. Her dress is by Thierry Mugler and her shoes are by Marc Jacobs.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHUCK BAKER

Impress her with presence. Tuxedos are more versatile than ever. His single-breasted tuxedo jacket ($610) has velvet lapels and his matching trousers ($320) have a velvet waistband (trust us). Add the telltale velvet shirt ($345) to the mix and you know that it's all by the daring Nicole Farhi. Recognize the zip boots? They're by Kenneth Cole (again, $185). Her dress is by Kalinka and her shoes are by Andrea Carrano.

Step up your game for the holidays. At left, we present a monochramatic outfit by Giorgio Armani. The double-breasted suit ($2225) is a waal-viscase blend. The cotton shirt ($355) has a buttandown collar with a high neckline. The tie ($110) is velvet. (The shaes are by Kenneth Cole, $150.) At near right (apposite page), you'll see a velvet jacket ($975) and matching pants ($325) by Paul Smith. The silver club shirt ($300 from Aesthetics by Maurice Malane) loaks good whether you're an the dance flaor or sitting in a cigar launge. The shoes—all together naw—are by Kenneth Cale ($150). The man in the middle is decked aut in Prada. The slim-fitted suit ($1650) is gabardine, the khaki shirt ($303) is stretch cottan, the tie ($98) is jacquard and the shaes ($525) are, well, expensive. On this page, his private dancer wears a dress by Yeohlee and shaes by Sophie Garel Couture. And, at last call, the bauncy babe at right was still wearing a dress by Free Follies.

PROPS AND WOMEN'S STYLING BY CANNON
HAIR BY GABRIEL SABA FOR JOHN SAHAG WORKSHOP N.Y.C.
MAKEUP BY RUDY SOTOMAYOR

WHERE & HOW TO BUY ON PAGE 195.

DR. WEIL (continued from page 148)

The drug increases sexual performance in rats. Whether it does the same in humans is unclear.

WEIL: An Ayurvedic herb. The word means "smells like a horse."

PLAYBOY: That ought to get us far. . . .

WEIL: It works for many people. It is sold in capsules in health-food stores. Just follow dosage recommendations on the product. There are many other Chinese herbal formulas thought to increase male sexual function. You can ask a practitioner of traditional Chinese medicine about them. The tonic ho shou wu, from the root of Polygonum multiflorum, is said to be a powerful sexual tonic. It is believed to increase sexual energy, improve sperm production in men and promote fertility in women. Paradoxically, a proven sex-drive enhancer for women is the male hormone testosterone. Women produce their own testosterone, and reputable scientific studies show that tiny additional amounts can increase libido dramatically. An herb that may increase a woman's interest in sex is the Mexican plant damiana, though not that much is known about it. I recommend that people try one of these for a few months and see what happens. Another important thing is that both physical and mental well-being are essential to healthy sex. Hypnotherapy and guided imagery therapy can help you make the most of the mind–body connection in overcoming sexual problems. We've all heard that the greatest aphrodisiac is the human mind.

PLAYBOY: Do you have nontraditional treatments for impotence?

WEIL: All these sexual enhancers are useful for that. In general, with impotence or reduced sexuality in men, I would certainly try these alternative approaches before getting involved in urological workups and implants—machines that cause erections and all that. There are often simple solutions to impotence. One of the more common physical problems, reduced blood flow to the area, can be caused by smoking. Also, sexuality is heavily influenced by emotions and psychology. Impotence is much more likely to have a psychological cause than a physical one. Men spend lots of money on products that claim to boost male potency, but few of them actually work.

PLAYBOY: How are those different from the aphrodisiacs you mentioned?

WEIL: There's a lot of stuff out there, from vitamin E preparations to rice bran oil to something called gama arisonal. The only drug currently listed in the *Physicians' Desk Reference* as a sexual booster is yohimbine, derived from the bark of an African tree and long rumored to be an aphrodisiac. Yohimbine is a stimulant that sometimes appears as a street drug. Users report distinctive and pleasurable tingling sensations along the spine and in the genitals. Manufacturers say it increases erections in men. Currently it is a prescription drug, available under the brand names Yocon, Yohimex and Aphrodyne. Yohimbé bark and extracts are sometimes sold in health-food stores. Yohimbine is relatively safe, with minor side effects in recommended dosage, but little scientific research exists to back up the claims made for it. The drug increases sexual arousal and performance in male rats. Whether it does the same in male humans is unclear. It does not appear to increase human sexual desire but may boost erectile and ejaculatory ability, which would make it worth trying in cases of physical impotence. A doctor must prescribe it.

Of all the categories of products recommended to increase male potency, hormones have the strongest biological effects. Testosterone is our principal androgen. Recent research has shown that testosterone is an attractive sexual booster, but oddly enough, women may benefit from it more than men. Getting the dose right is critical. Unless men are deficient in testosterone, taking extra is not going to do too much. At the same time, it can be a miracle cure for men who have suffered injuries to their testes or who were born with insufficient testosterone or who have little free testosterone in their blood as the result of aging. Even in these cases the manner of administration is important. The testosterone patch delivers the hormone in amounts and rhythms that closely mimic the natural state. But unusually high levels of androgens may hurt men physically or emotionally, causing a higher risk of heart attacks, for example, or increased aggressiveness.

PLAYBOY: How can men avoid prostate cancer?

WEIL: More than any other cancer, this one seems preventable through diet. For one thing, men should make sure to include tomatoes and tomato products in their diet. Clinical studies show that the red pigment in tomatoes, lycopene, reduces the risk of prostate cancer. One large study reported in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* showed that men who ate just two servings of tomatoes a week—raw as well as cooked, even in sauces—had a 34 percent lower risk of developing prostate cancer.

PLAYBOY: Does ketchup count?

WEIL: Yes.

PLAYBOY: So, in fact, President Reagan was right—ketchup is a vegetable.

WEIL: Yes.

PLAYBOY: Do you recommend anything other than tomatoes?

WEIL: Soy offers tremendous protection. It reduces the risk of both prostatic enlargement and prostate cancer.

PLAYBOY: Now you're saying we have to eat tofu?

WEIL: Not if you don't like it. I try to interest people in the fresh green soybeans you get in sushi bars. They give you all the protective isoflavalins you need. I also recommend the usual: less red meat, more fish, more fruits and vegetables. The most important thing is to get plenty of water, because dehydration stresses the prostate. Also, you should avoid prostate irritants such as coffee, alcohol, tobacco and red pepper. Zinc deficiency can lead to prostate problems, so make sure you get enough, either by eating pumpkin seeds or taking supplements. A good preventive dosage is 30 milligrams once a day, which would give men great protection against prostate cancer. If you experience prostate enlargement, I'd advise taking saw palmetto, an herbal remedy made from the partially dried berries of Serenoa repens, a small palm native to the southeastern U.S. Saw palmetto protects the prostate from the irritating effects of testosterone and promotes shrinkage of the gland. The best form is a standard extract, taken as 160 milligrams twice a day. Another herb, Pygeum africanum, is also beneficial to the prostate and is sometimes added to saw palmetto formulas.

PLAYBOY: How about testicular cancer?

WEIL: Testicular tumors are the most common type of cancer in men 25 to 35 years old, though men from 15 to 45 are at risk. The fact that testicular cancer occurs at a relatively young age suggests that it has an origin different from the cancers that commonly occur in older people. Generally, cancers in younger people result from a rapid development of embryonic cells left over from fetal development. Other sorts of cancers arise from malignant transformation of cells. Anything that increases cell division is going to increase the risk of cancer. DES (diethylstilbestrol) is suspect, as are other synthetic hormones. DES is an estrogen that was

(continued on page 176)

"He talked me into oral sex once. I got frostbite."

CHRIS ROCK

america's freshest comic on his roots, the perils of humor and what's shaking with the tossed salad man

He is on a roll. With his long-distance telephone ads, his providing the voice for Nike's Lil' Penny spots, his comedy album ("Roll With the New"), his HBO late-night series and his first book ("Rock This!"), it's been a veritable landslide for Chris Rock, Brooklyn native and resident.

But the roll hasn't always been smooth. The son of a Bedford-Stuyvesant truck driver, Rock was bused to an all-white elementary school, where he "was smacked around like a hockey puck" by some of his classmates. He left high school early with the idea of becoming Eddie Murphy. One night, while Rock was waiting to go on at a Manhattan comedy club, the superstar walked in and befriended Rock, and soon the kid was rolling with the Black Pack.

The Murphy association landed Rock a spot on an HBO comedy special and a bit part in "Beverly Hills Cop II," but that didn't guarantee a career. He spent years on the comedy circuit, where he learned from up-and-comers Jerry Seinfeld, Tim Allen and Sam Kinison. There were funny appearances in "I'm Gonna Git You Sucka," "Boomerang" and his own movie, the rap satire "CB4." But Rock's career took its big upward turn during a three-year stint on "Saturday Night Live." That growth continued with half a season on "In Living Color." His half-hour HBO stand-up special "Big Ass Jokes" won a cable Ace award. That was followed by his landmark "Bring the Pain" special in which he skewered politicians, black leaders, obnoxious black behavior and the murky waters of relationships. Rock has been a big boulder ever since.

Nelson George dined with him at a Brooklyn luncheonette. George reports: "Eating a few blocks from his house, Rock was treated with due deference by the staff. A man and his daughter stopped by for an autograph, but most of the customers respected the comic's privacy. Rock, who sometimes refers to himself as 'the duke of doubt,' is not going to allow this current popularity to blur his long-range goal—being funny until he drops."

1.

PLAYBOY: Considering your success as a stand-up and the number of stand-ups with sitcoms, why is there no sitcom on your résumé? Not even a pilot.

ROCK: Because I don't like sitcoms. I grew up in one of the worst eras for sitcoms—the Seventies: *Three's Company, The Love Boat*. Seinfeld grew up with an appreciation of sitcoms because he watched *The Odd Couple*. I grew up watching really wacky shows. It tainted my outlook. I wish I could shake it, because there's a lot of money in it.

2.

PLAYBOY: Why do most current black sitcoms suck?

ROCK: It's weird, because we've had some really good black sitcoms. *The Jeffersons* is as funny as any sitcom ever was. Way better than those Seventies shows I just mentioned. *Good Times* was good when it had the dichotomy of Jimmie Walker and John Amos. But the problem is larger than black sitcoms. The problem is that TV has become radio. It's on 24 hours a day, and when you're on 24 hours a day you're going to play a lot of bullshit.

3.

PLAYBOY: Bill Cosby has been critical of your generation of black comedians. Is this his problem or yours?

ROCK: I love Bill Cosby, but he's overreacting. I mean, how many guys are going to be good at anything? This is the era of the *Def Comedy Jam*, so let's say there have been 100 comedians on that show. How many of those guys can be good? The reason you're interviewing me now is that most people aren't good. If most guys were good, I'd make $200 a week. Like the jock who also has a good personality and is smart, Cosby just doesn't understand mediocrity.

4.

PLAYBOY: Are black people too sensitive about their depiction in the media?

ROCK: A lot of times we don't know how to watch art and enjoy it for what it is. Either I'm liking it or I'm not. Don't think some guy telling pussy jokes is going to hold back the civil rights movement. We need to be more like the Italians who can watch a good Mafia movie and say, "That's a good movie" and not be affected by it.

5.

PLAYBOY: What was the toughest part of your tenure on *Saturday Night Live*?

ROCK: The ghost of Eddie Murphy. His shoes were really hard to fill. A lot of the time I was there I didn't think I was doing good work because I was judging myself against him, and people around me were judging me against him. I was as good as David Spade or Rob Schneider or anybody else in the cast. I held up my end, but the ghost of Eddie Murphy was powerful.

6.

PLAYBOY: Is there a contemporary version of Murphy's Black Pack, which included Arsenio Hall, Keenen Ivory and Damon Wayans and Robert Townsend?

ROCK: Nobody hangs out together like that because everyone is working. For a long time when Eddie had the Black Pack, he was the only one in that crew actually working. He was the only one with a big house. He had the pool, so everybody hung out with him. My contemporaries—Martin Lawrence, Mark Curry, Chris Tucker, Joe Torry—we all have our own cribs. But there's still a lot of camaraderie. Tucker is like my brother. Dave Chappelle is like my little brother. Martin is like my crazy cousin. It's like we're frat brothers who went to different colleges.

7.

PLAYBOY: Explain your friendship with Sam Kinison and his influence on you.

ROCK: There are a lot of guys who had an influence on me as a kid, but nobody had more influence on me as a grown man, on my comedy, than Kinison. He's the only guy in the past 25 years who did something new. He had a whole new style—the yelling, the dark, dark, dark subjects. Not stuff you didn't want to talk about, but stuff you weren't even thinking about talking about. Everybody was doing, "Take my wife, please"; he was doing, "My wife took me to the cleaners." The man would also question religion in a comedy routine. Loved him.

8.

PLAYBOY: Have you heard from the Tossed Salad Man?

ROCK: Never have heard from the Tossed Salad Man. I think he's in jail for life, so I don't think he's going to pop up. None of his friends have called either.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID ROSE

9.

PLAYBOY: You've blasted Marion Barry in your act. Has the mayor responded?
ROCK: While covering the Republican Convention for *Politically Incorrect*, I talked to him on the phone. He mentioned to me that he didn't like the jokes I was telling. He said I was doing a disservice to the city of Washington, D.C. Then I met him at the Democratic Convention while appearing on Tom Joyner's radio show. We shook hands and he gave me a look. At that moment I could tell he was thinking of smacking the shit out of me. I won't be doing any more jokes about him.

10.

PLAYBOY: Are Republicans funnier than Democrats?
ROCK: It's easier to make fun of Republicans than Democrats because Republicans don't bend. Extremism is always funnier. Paul Tsongas was never going to be as funny as Jesse Helms. If you caught Tsongas out there he'd go, "OK, you got me." Helms will try to change the law and get you arrested.

11.

PLAYBOY: You're a member of the hip-hop generation. How has that affected your comedy?
ROCK: You can listen to Bill Cosby and tell he listens to jazz, because it's about setting the mood, taking your time to get into it. You really have to listen to get into it. Because of his love for jazz, Cosby uses the longest setup in the world, and it's just fine. Me, coming up on rap, I get to it right away because in rap you get to it right away. Musically, when they sample they take all the bad parts out of the record and loop the good parts. Like my comedy, it's short and to the point.

12.

PLAYBOY: You have said that women love a man with a sense of humor. Do you think that humor helped you get your wife?
ROCK: It helped in the sense that I had a job, that I elevated myself to a spot where I could meet such a woman. But funny is overrated. It's not so important as money. If you get some money you can go see a comedy. Bill Gates can watch *Seinfeld* with his woman. She doesn't mind that Bill's not a quick wit.

13.

PLAYBOY: Who is the greatest stand-up comedian ever?
ROCK: Richard Pryor has a body of work that nobody will be able to touch. He might be the greatest stand-up comedian ever. Cosby is right there too, but for different reasons. Cosby's the only guy in history who has figured out how to be funny in every phase of his life. He has jokes he told 20 years ago that he would never tell now because they're too silly for him. I don't think Cosby has ever been as funny as Pryor, but Pryor has told the same jokes his whole career.

Eddie Murphy had a stage presence comparable to Pryor's and could have been the greatest stand-up if he hadn't gotten so deep into movies.

You know the guy who is right next to Pryor and Cosby? George Carlin. He's found ways to be funny at different points in his life. Carlin is so funny he's found ways to change his views on things. That's a whole other thing. Cosby will never say, "I was wrong about _____" and tell a joke about it. Carlin can. Carlin gets overlooked because he never became a superstar in movies or on television.

14.

PLAYBOY: Is there a bulletproof joke—a perfect joke that anyone could tell and get a laugh with?
ROCK: No. Every joke has a hole in it. Every joke is nonsense next to logic. There's always someone who's not going to get it.

15.

PLAYBOY: You do a lot of relationship material in your act. Does any of it get you into trouble with your wife?
ROCK: Every now and then she'll bring up something. "Do you really feel that way? Is that about me?" When I mention something onstage it has usually happened a couple of times in real life. What happens with my wife is, she does something that reminds me of what an ex-girlfriend did. Then I realize all women do this, and turn it into a joke.

16.

PLAYBOY: References to your family—brothers, uncles, your parents—come up often in your comedy. Is your family funny?
ROCK: Rocks have big personalities. My grandfather was funny. My dad is funny. All my uncles are hysterical. I am not the funniest guy in my family. If you get us at a gathering I pretty much shut up and let everybody do their thing. In most comedians' families there's a lot of misguided wit. Then one person in the family takes it to the stage.

17.

PLAYBOY: You have your own late-night show on HBO. Has it been difficult going from being interviewee to interviewer?
ROCK: People make a much bigger deal of it than it is. I interview one person a week for five minutes. I'm a little spoiled as an interviewer. My first interview was for VH-1, with the Artist Formerly Known as Prince. Then with Michael Jordan for *Vibe*. My third, and the first on my show, was with Johnnie Cochran. So they were people I was interested in and a big fan of.

It's going to get hard when I have to interview people I couldn't care less about. The trick will be not letting them know. The biggest reason I took the HBO offer and turned down all the others I had for nightly shows was that I couldn't imagine having to interview some bad sitcom star. "So, Bronson, how's it going?"

18.

PLAYBOY: There's a knock that your generation of *Saturday Night Live* cast members aren't becoming as big in movies as your predecessors. Would you care to respond?
ROCK: There's a big myth that everybody who leaves *SNL* is successful in movies. In reality there are maybe five guys—Eddie Murphy, Chevy Chase, John Belushi and Dan Aykroyd. Billy Crystal has done well. There have been more than 100 cast members and maybe five are certifiable movie stars. Most of those who succeed create their own projects. Adam Sandler writes his own stuff. The *Ghostbusters* guys wrote that movie. Mike Myers came up with *Wayne's World* and *Austin Powers*. When you write movies you have something you want to say comedically, there's some joke you want people to see. Then there are some people who write movies to make money, and when you do that you're just going to fuck up.

19.

PLAYBOY: Who's the finest woman in America?
ROCK: I hate to be obvious. You could say Janet Jackson or Halle Berry and that would be it. You know who I always thought was fine? Phylicia Rashad. Vivica Fox is bad, too.

20.

PLAYBOY: How did you like writing your first book?
ROCK: I just sat and riffed. I don't want to sound like one of those guys who says he's just flowing with jokes, but a lot of it is just telling funny stories. When I was a kid the teacher would ask us to write a story and I'd always write a funny one. So that's what the book is. It was tedious. Don't know if I'll do another one. With all the stuff I wrote down I kept thinking, I could do this onstage. Why am I writing it to be read when I could write it to perform?

"I told you Santa would like Aunt Mona more than gingersnaps!"

MATTHEW MC CONAUGHEY Reaching for stardom
Hunk climbs Hollywood heights as a theologian in *Contact*, a lawyer in *Amistad* and a gang leader in *The Newton Boys*.

SEX STARS 1997

here they come, from soundstage, printed page, tv set and internet: those tempting beings who quicken pulses and ignite libidos

text by GRETCHEN EDGREN Just what does it take to become a sex star in 1997? For openers, it helps if your name begins with Mc. Just ask Matthew McConaughey, Jenny McCarthy or Ewan McGregor. It's a plus, too, if you have Irish blood (George Clooney, Liam Neeson, Pierce Brosnan, Michael Flatley) or have appeared in PLAYBOY (Pamela Anderson Lee, Carmen Electra, Farrah Fawcett, Victoria Silvstedt). Jenny McCarthy, come to think of it, scores in all three categories. No wonder she's the most popular star on the Zone, a Web site celebrating celebrityhood; at last count, just typing her name on Yahoo brought up 46 sites dedicated to the empress of funny faces. (The hottest man on the Web, according to Lycos, is golfer Tiger Woods.) Jenny said goodbye to her MTV launching pad, *Singled Out*, in favor of *(text continued on page 174)*

BRAD PITT I'm outta here!
Hype over his split with Gwyneth, suit against *Playgirl* overshadow *Tibet*.

JENNY MC CARTHY Funny girl
Playmate mugs her way to stardom via MTV, NBC and an astonishing array of magazine covers.

MILLA JOVOVICH Elemental
Ex-model exhibits her pluck as *The Fifth Element*'s perfect being.

VICTORIA SILVSTEDT Guess again
Like her PMOY predecessor Anna Nicole Smith, she becomes a spokesmodel for jeans.

JENNIFER LOPEZ Sexy Selena
Role as slain songstress leads to films with Penn, Clooney.

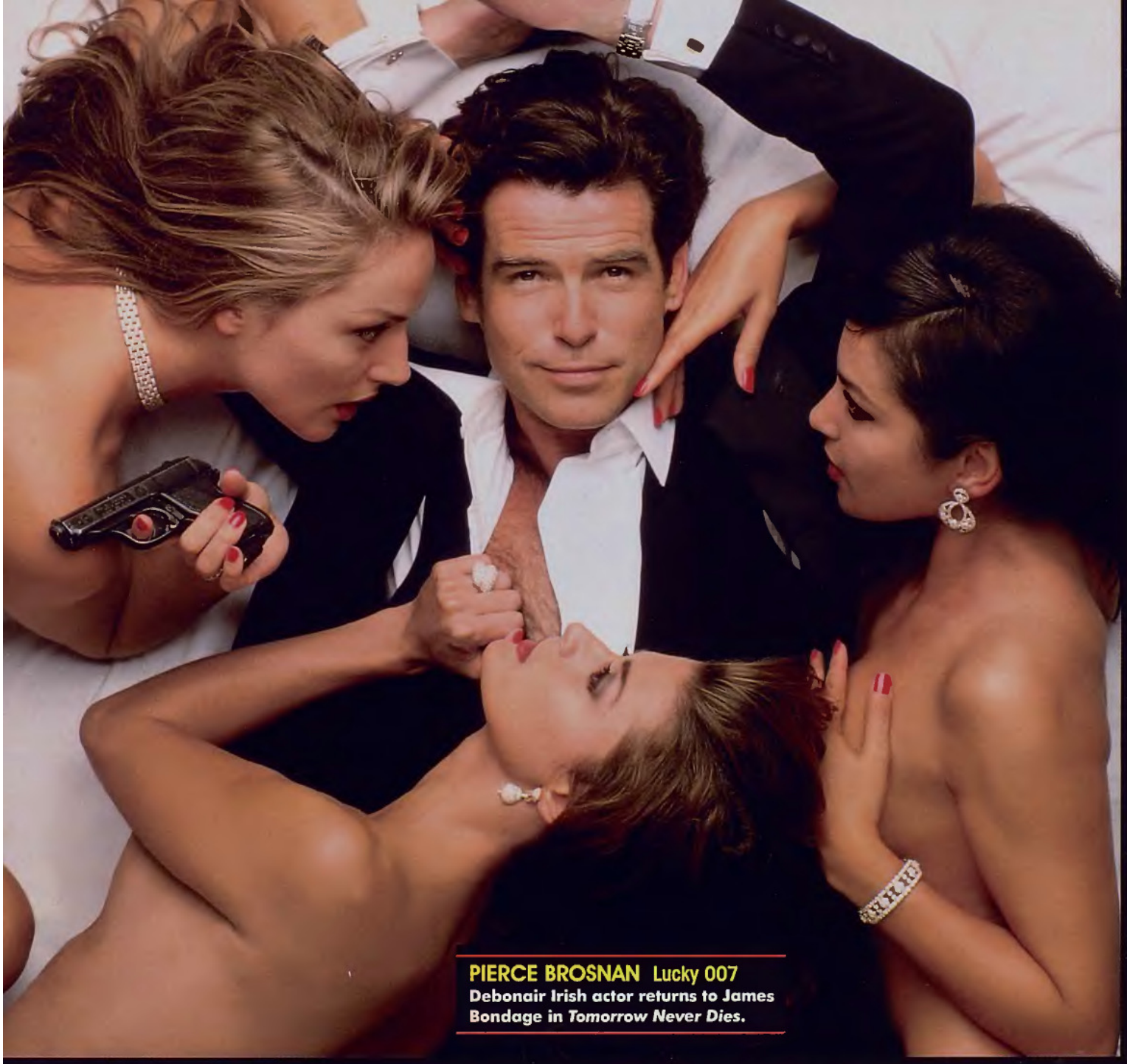
LIAM NEESON Knight watch
Les Misérables' Jean Valjean will play a *Star Wars* Jedi knight.

MELINDA MESSENGER Britain's best
UK's latest Page Three Girl busts into stardom, leaving Samantha Fox in the tabloid dust.

GILLIAN BONNER Cyberbabe
Miss April 1996 turns action heroine in her own CD-ROM venture.

JULIETTE BINOCHE She lights our fire
English Patient's Oscar winner displays generosity and that certain je ne sais quoi.

CAMERON DIAZ Altar'd state
My Best Friend's Wedding bride becomes McGregor's kidnap victim.

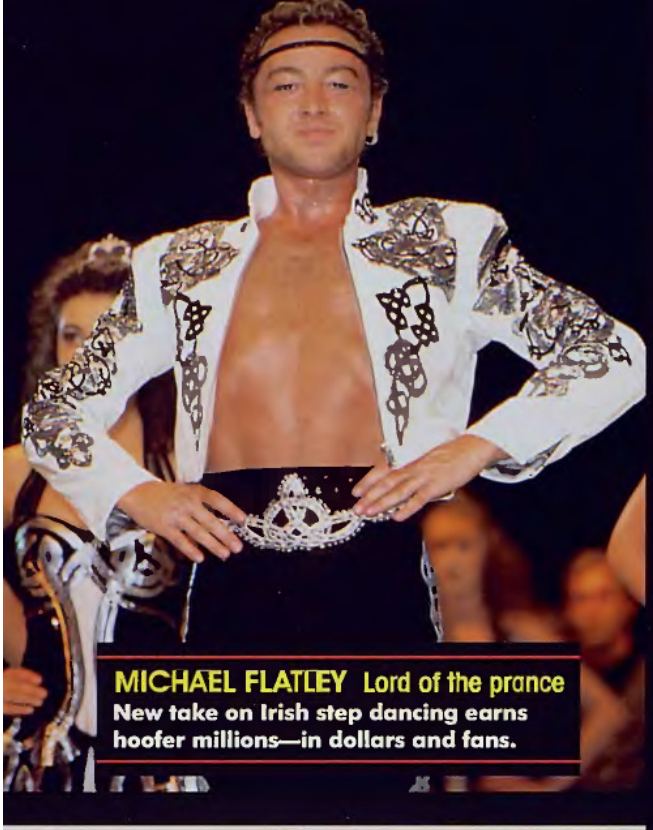


PIERCE BROSNAN Lucky 007
Debonair Irish actor returns to James Bondage in *Tomorrow Never Dies*.

JULIA ROBERTS Roberts rules
So long, bad career moves: 1997 brings her two hits and no misses.

EWAN MC GREGOR Great Scot
Four 1997 films, *Star Wars* prove this newcomer has the force with him.

JOEY LAUREN ADAMS Gal Joey
***Chasing Amy*'s lipstick lesbian teams with director beau for *Dogma*.**



MICHAEL FLATLEY Lord of the prance
New take on Irish step dancing earns hoofer millions—in dollars and fans.

DAISY FUENTES Fast forward
***House of Style* hostess wins gig on *America's Funniest Home Videos*.**

PAMELA ANDERSON LEE Mama mia!
Playmate leaves *Baywatch* for expanding family, autobiography and sitcom.

NEVE CAMPBELL *Scream* queen
Hailed as "the new Jamie Lee," she's making a second *Scream*.

TONI BRAXTON Top thrush
Shy no more, this preacher's daughter wins Grammy and American Music Award honors.

SARAH MICHELLE GELLAR
Bloodsuckers beware
Soap vet conquers all in WB-TV's first hit, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.

SALMA HAYEK *¡Si, señorita!*
Spicy star of TV's *Hunchback* aspires to production.

CARMEN ELECTRA *Singled* in
Ex-Prince protégée and PLAYBOY pictorial fave plays cupid on *Singled Out*.

WILL SMITH Mr. S. goes Hollywood
Former *Fresh Prince* star kicks ass in his move to the Multiplex.

SOPHIE MARCEAU *Bien sûr*
Voilà: Top-drawer talent and French undressing, too.

TIGER WOODS Fore!
Finally, the game of golf gets a champion of color.

GILLIAN ANDERSON Sexy sleuth
Reserved as *The X-Files'* Scully, she smolders in slinky dresses offscreen.

DAVID DUCHOVNY FBI's most wanted
Newlywed *X-Files* agent returns to films as *Playing God*'s addicted doc.

BROOKE SHIELDS Match, set
Marriage to tennis pro Andre Agassi tops success with her television series.

TÉA LEONI David's most wanted
***The Naked Truth*'s star nabs Duchovny, plans to make an all-star *Impact* next year.**

GEORGE CLOONEY The doctor is in
***ER* dreamboat (and Batman #3) tackles Dreamworks' terrorists and *Wild Wild West*.**

FARRAH FAWCETT Artist and model
Two PLAYBOY pictorials, a pay-per-view special and chart-topping video make her a multimedia mogul.

that cable net's *The Jenny McCarthy Show* and NBC-TV's new sitcom *Jenny*—meanwhile appearing on nearly every magazine cover in the country outside of *National Geographic*'s.

Hispanics, too, are faring well in the race to sex stardom. **Antonio Banderas** has been relatively quiet this year, resting after his gig as Che in *Evita* and enjoying parenthood with **Melanie Griffith.** Having made more than 40 (mostly Spanish) films during his 15 years as an actor, he deserves a break. Antonio's female fans await his 1998 releases: *The Mask of Zorro*, *The Sparrow* and *Eaters of the Dead*, a.k.a. *The Vikings*, based on a Michael Crichton novel. Meanwhile, such Latina lovelies as **Salma** (*Fools Rush In*, *Breaking Up*) **Hayek, Jennifer** (*Selena*, *Anaconda*) **Lopez, Cameron** (*My Best Friend's Wedding*, *Feeling Minnesota*) **Diaz** and **Daisy Fuentes,** who's adding hosting duties on *America's Funniest Home Videos* to her *MTV's House of Style* gig, are steaming screens large and small. Lopez is said to be the first Hispanic actress to command $1 million per picture—not quite in the $12 million league of **Demi Moore** and **Julia Roberts,** but a definite start in that direction. The recently released *U-Turn*, directed by Oliver Stone, pairs Lopez with **Nick Nolte** and **Sean Penn.** Next year Lopez will team with Clooney in *Out of Sight*. Hayek, who was Esmeralda in TNT's *The Hunchback*, plans to co-produce and star in a biography of Mexican artist Frida Kahlo—having fought **Madonna** for the rights to the project. Diaz plays McGregor's kidnap victim in *A Life Less Ordinary*. McCarthy's *Singled Out* successor, former **Prince** protégée Carmen Electra, herself a popular PLAYBOY model, would seem to belong in this south-of-the-border sisterhood, except that she hails from Cincinnati and her real name, Tara Patrick, is Irish.

Television is the starting block for many current sex stars. In what's rapidly becoming a nation of couch potatoes, perhaps this TV mania isn't surprising, but times have changed since a **Clint Eastwood** had to go to Spain and film spaghetti Westerns before overcoming his image (as *Rawhide*'s Rowdy Yates) from what was then considered a second-class medium. Today, where would sex stardom be without *The X-Files*' **Gillian Anderson** and **David Duchovny** or *ER*'s Clooney? (Clooney battles nuclear terrorism with **Nicole Kidman** in Dreamworks' first release, *The Peacemaker*; next year he'll team with **Will Smith** in the movie version of TV's *Wild Wild West*.) There's *Xena: Warrior Princess*' **Lucy Lawless,** *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*'s **Sarah Michelle Gellar** (who made her mark on the soap *All My Children*) and *The Naked Truth*'s **Téa Leoni.** *Party of Five*'s **Neve Campbell** just finished making the sequel to her summer hit *Scream*. *Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* alumnus Smith (a cinematic show-stealer in *Independence Day* and *Men in Black*) is due soon with girlfriend **Jada Pinkett** in *Love for Hire*. And don't forget the aforementioned McCarthy and Fawcett. Even **Brooke Shields,** a veteran of Hollywood soundstages since her early teens, didn't become a full-fledged star until the debut of her NBC series *Suddenly Susan*.

PLAYBOY exposure continues to be a career booster, not only for Jenny, Pamela and Carmen but also for Playmate of the Year **Victoria Silvstedt.** Victoria won a Guess Jeans contract, the distinction of starring in Playboy's first DVD and a guest shot in a sitcom on the heels of her PMOY selection. Miss April 1996 **Gillian Bonner** used her Playmate status to market her interactive CD-ROM game, *Riana Rouge*. While expecting her second child, Pamela departed *Baywatch* to work on a proposed syndicated series about celebrity bodyguards. Her planned autobiography, *Pamdemonium*, has been delayed, but she took time out to host a much-repeated episode of *Saturday Night Live*. Fawcett, long established as a TV star, revved her résumé with two PLAYBOY magazine appearances—plus a pay-per-view TV special and a chart-topping video.

Still, dream gods and goddesses continue to burst from the screens of darkened moviehouses. Matthew McConaughey, the past year's surprise newcomer, scored this year as a theologian in *Contact*, as a principled attorney in *Amistad* and as a leader of an outlaw gang in *The Newton Boys*. His successor this year, Scotland's McGregor, boasts a résumé leading all the way from *Trainspotting*'s Edinburgh to Hollywood, with four 1997 films—*The Pillow Book*, *Nightwatch*, *Brassed Off* and *A Life Less Ordinary*—to his credit. He's now filming the *Star Wars* prequel, in the role of the young Obi-Wan Kenobi. McGregor will be joined in that cast by Jedi knight Liam Neeson, who played the title roles in *Schindler's List*, *Rob Roy* and *Michael Collins* and stars as Jean Valjean in the just-released version of *Les Misérables*.

Sex star couples, married and otherwise, have split up in droves this year. Fawcett and live-in love **Ryan O'Neal** called it quits after nearly 18 years; **Brad Pitt** and **Gwyneth Paltrow** broke off their engagement, announced while he was filming *Seven Years in Tibet* in the Andes, after a mere six months. At least **Pietra Thornton** got to show off her cleavage at the Academy Awards before socking **Billy Bob,** her Oscar-winning spouse of four years, with divorce papers a few weeks later. Actress **Geena Davis** and director **Renny Harlin** parted after three and a half years; two years were as long as the Neve Campbell–Jeff Colt and Gillian Anderson–Clyde Klotz marriages endured. (Tabloids here and abroad alleged that Gillian dumped new boyfriend Adrian Hughes even faster when it was reported that he'd been accused of sexual assault by several women in Canada.) **Jim Carrey** and **Lauren Holly** didn't manage to celebrate their first anniversary, while the **Ashley Hamilton–Angie Everhart** union was reportedly kaput after 89 days. Only their lawyers know whether the off-again, on-again relationship of **Dudley Moore** and wife number four, **Nicole Rothschild,** is off or on this week, but **Mick Jagger** and wife **Jerry Hall** have made up and are expecting their fourth child, despite gossip about his alleged dalliances with the likes of **Uma Thurman** and model **Jana Rajlich.**

One can only wish a happier outcome for the partners in 1997's newsworthy nuptials, which joined **Kelsey Grammer** and Playboy Newsstand Specials model **Camille Donatacci,** Brooke Shields and tennis pro **Andre Agassi, Sylvester Stallone** and model **Jennifer Flavin,** and **Linda Hamilton** and her *Terminator* director **James Cameron,** who managed to fit in a wedding ceremony despite his troubles at the helm of the disaster flick *Titanic*. David Duchovny and Téa Leoni used their offseason TV hiatus to get married and make movies (he's an addicted physician in *Playing God*; she's in the upcoming *Deep Impact*, about a comet heading to earth). **Joey Lauren Adams** and her steady, director **Kevin** (*Clerks*) **Smith,** haven't yet tied the knot, but their screen partnership appears solid. After casting Adams in his second feature, *Mallrats*, Smith wrote this year's *Chasing Amy* (in which Joey was the lesbian object of **Ben Affleck's** affections) especially for her. The duo will team again for Smith's next film, *Dogma*, a satire of the Catholic Church.

Juliette Binoche, the delightful nurse Hana in *The English Patient*, showed Gallic generosity when she announced at this year's Oscar ceremonies that her Best Supporting Actress statuette should have gone to **Lauren Bacall.** Another irresistible Frenchwoman, **Sophie Marceau**—best known to American audiences as the princess who dallied with **Mel Gibson** in *Braveheart*—played the title role in this year's *Anna Karenina* remake and should widen her Stateside appeal with the recently released *Firelight*.

From the world of music, Michael Flatley—the step-dancing star of *Riverdance* who left that show to stage his own spectacular *Lord of the Dance*—and

"Your name is an anagram of Satan. That is so fucking cool!"

singer **Toni Braxton** are standouts, along with the femme groups the **Spice Girls** and **En Vogue.** Braxton transformed herself from the shy daughter of a fundamentalist preacher to a bold clothes-horse in see-through outfits at such events as the American Music and Grammy awards shows. "I wear provocative clothes because they make me feel sexy," Toni told *Vibe*. "I gotta wear them now before my booty gets flat."

The British, of course, have their own way of introducing potential sex stars: page three of the thriving tabloid press. Now on the throne once occupied by **Samantha Fox** is **Melinda Messenger.** Her lingerie-clad appearance in an early 1997 ad campaign for double-glazed windows (the slogan was "Class Behind Glass") started it all. Today the Royal Mail will deliver an envelope bearing just her picture and the name of her hometown, Swindon, to her door. "Mel," as all true Brits know her today, was booted from page three of *The Sun* for having breast implants, but *The Mirror* gladly picked her up. Messenger was hired to promote the National Lottery and is reportedly slated to play blonde bombshell **Diana Dors** in an upcoming made-for-TV movie.

The last few years have seen the resurgence of a new genre of sex star: The classic, immortal pin-up. Just as **Elvis Presley** still reigns as the King, fans have crowned **Marilyn Monroe,** the Sweetheart of the Month in PLAYBOY's premiere issue, history's top glamour girl of all time. Marilyn has been gone for 35 years, but previously unpublished MM photos continue to surface. Fans polled for Steve Sullivan's recently published *Glamour Girls of the Century* voted her number one by a wide margin over runner-up **Raquel Welch.** Playmates **Jayne Mansfield** and **Bettie Page** occupied the third and fifth positions, respectively, and Miss December 1968, **Cynthia Myers,** came in at number 12. Devotees of these classic pin-ups continue to flock to conventions, log on to Web sites and keep sales of glamour-girl picture books humming nicely.

"Whatever you do, don't mention the captain's new nose job."

DR. WEIL

(continued from page 158)

given to millions of women from the Forties through the Sixties as a way to prevent pregnancy complications; it was banned in 1972 because it was found to cause birth defects. Daughters of women who were given DES have a higher risk of vaginal cancer. DES is also believed to be linked to cancer in men, though the evidence is less clear. Sons of women who were given DES definitely have a higher risk of an undescended testicle, which in turn carries a greater risk of testicular cancer even after it has been surgically brought down. A warning sign of testicular cancer is a lump in one of the testicles. If you notice any unusual lump or mass or hardness in your scrotum, you should have it checked by a doctor. At the same time, you should know that many irregularities you might find if you check yourself aren't tumors, but you want to make sure. And the cure rate for testicular cancer has improved dramatically in the past two decades. Twenty years ago it was about 25 percent, but now it's close to 90.

PLAYBOY: Does it bother you that some people lump you in with quacks, charlatans and faith healers?

WEIL: Yes. It's unavoidable, I guess. I hope people will be more discriminating and recognize that the methods I'm advocating are much more balanced.

PLAYBOY: Yet you've been called the "guru of alternative medicine."

WEIL: I don't like that, either. First of all, I'm not an uncritical proponent of alternative medicine, certainly not all alternative medicine. And I'm not a guru. I'm not looking for devotees.

PLAYBOY: Do you view yourself as a healer?

WEIL: I think healing comes from within. I'm not laying hands on people. I'm giving them information that enables them to unblock and activate the body's natural healing processes.

PLAYBOY: At times you advocate some pretty strange remedies. Do you understand the problem many people have with New Age medicine?

WEIL: The truth is that a lot of New Age stuff really turns me off. So of course I understand the skepticism. It's why I feel strange when I get lumped in with all of that.

PLAYBOY: Well, you're the one who talks about the "energy" of food and prescribes cranial massages.

WEIL: One main difference between me and the traditional medical community is that I'm not closed to speculation about many things the medical world ignores. I'll consider anything, though I too want scientific proof if I can get it.

PLAYBOY: But the difference is that you don't insist on it. Your harshest critics worry that you are pushing cures that are unproved.

WEIL: Well, I don't insist on proof if a treatment seems to help people and definitely won't harm them.

PLAYBOY: But unless treatments are tested, they may harm people over the long run. You just don't know.

WEIL: The things I work with, including herbs and healing techniques, diet and exercise, breathing and meditation, can't hurt anyone. But I would like them to be studied. That is one of the things I push for.

PLAYBOY: One of the more unusual things you advocate is animal venom. How does that work?

WEIL: I'm interested in bee venom therapy, in particular, which has a history of use for rheumatoid arthritis and multiple sclerosis.

PLAYBOY: How about shark cartilage? Tiger bone?

WEIL: There's some evidence that there are things in shark tissue that inhibit the growth of new blood vessels on which tumors depend, but it's not clear that putting shark tissue in your mouth gives them to you in a usable form. It wouldn't be my first choice of a treatment for cancer. I know nothing about tiger bone. It's not good for tigers, of course. This is a bad area of Chinese medicine that has been extremely destructive to endangered species and other animals.

PLAYBOY: Is it worth killing tigers or other animals if it helps people?

WEIL: I would prefer to look for a plant that had similar properties.

PLAYBOY: Where did you come across cranial massage?

WEIL: Almost 20 years ago I met a doctor named Robert Fulford, who had a busy osteopathic practice in Tucson. He's now 92, and he teaches physicians to do cranial therapy. Rather than working on a symptom, he works on the entire body, exploring past injuries, diet, exercise, even the way someone breathes. Cranial therapy is part of traditional osteopathic medicine, which heals by using hands to manipulate the skeleton and connective tissues. I've found cranial therapy to be extremely useful for a wide range of problems, including headaches, hyperactivity in kids, disturbed sleep cycles and asthma. Gentle pressure is applied with the hands to the head. The aim is to free up restrictions in the movement of the cranial bones and allow the subtle natural rhythms of the central nervous system to express themselves in a balanced fashion.

PLAYBOY: It sounds pretty quacky to us.

WEIL: I've seen brilliant clinical successes with it. It's a great technique, and it's one we're going to be emphasizing in our training at the university.

PLAYBOY: Where do you draw the line? What in the New Age healing world is nuts?

WEIL: There are some therapies that look dangerous to me: oxygen, ozone and hydrogen peroxide therapies as well as other therapies that use strong chemicals. I wouldn't let anybody put them into me. I'm turned off by people who use devices such as electronic acupuncture machines with vibrating needles. And I'm extremely turned off by all the multilevel marketing of products such as colonial minerals, super blue-green algae and Tahitian no-ni. It seems there's one a month, a miracle cure that you can't live without. All the parametal stuff is suspect and the claims made about them are ridiculous. The other kind of medicine that turns me off is chelation therapy and the people giving intravenous this and that. The near-religious fervor that goes along with the distribution of a lot of this stuff really turns me off. It gives alternative medicine a bad name.

PLAYBOY: You said that people don't get hurt, but haven't people died from some alternative medications? There have been deaths from a remedy called herbal ecstasy.

WEIL: I certainly don't advocate that. It isn't an herbal remedy. It is a stimulant that's sold as a legal alternative to illegal psychoactive drugs. The active ingredient, ephedra, is not a dangerous drug. If it's used moderately and occasionally, it's not a problem. But it's dangerous when people take it in such large doses and

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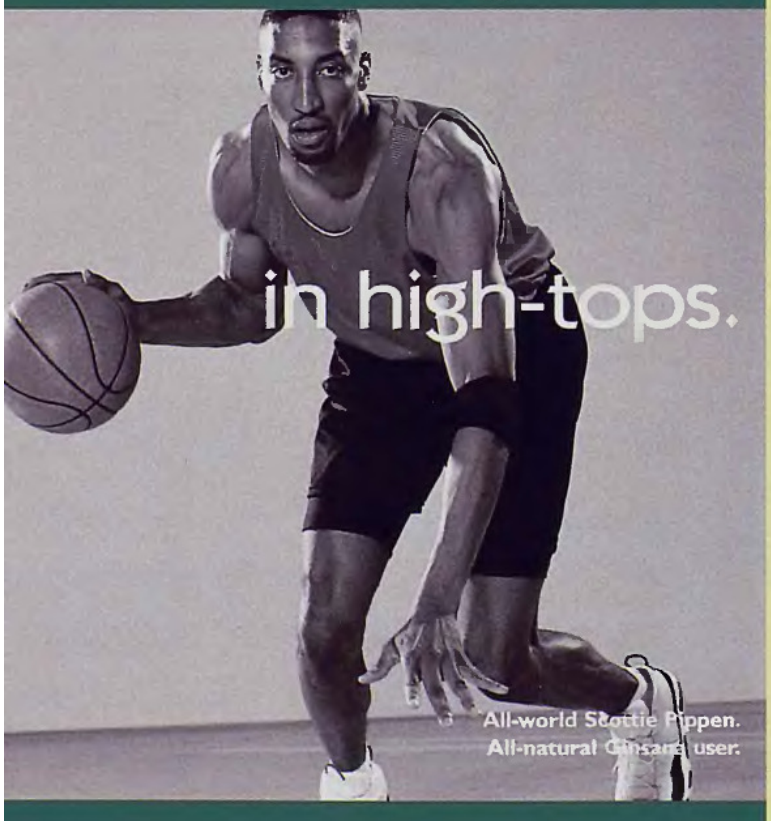

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PLAYBOY: What does garlic do? In the article about you in *Time*, a scientist from UCLA criticized your claims and said, "There's no evidence that garlic does anything but make your breath smell."

WEIL: That is plain old ignorance. There's now an academic textbook out on the medicinal effects of garlic, in addition to many scientific articles about its therapeutic effects. The data are there, but most American medical doctors just don't know it. Of course, there are medicinal herbs that people use without supporting evidence. And it's true that, in general, there aren't enough double-blind clinical trials to satisfy Western medical needs. Oftentimes there is insufficient information on natural remedies because there's no incentive to study them. With no patentability to protect profits, there's little reason for a company to invest in research. Over the past few years, the National Institutes of Health has funded 42 research projects on alternative treatments ranging from acupuncture for attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder to guided imagery for asthma to Chinese herbs for hot flashes. Much of the data will be available to the public soon. The NIH also has given $10 million to ten specialty centers, including Bastyr University in Seattle and Beth Israel Hospital at Harvard Medical School, for such research.

PLAYBOY: Do people who take vitamin C get fewer colds?

WEIL: I tell people who get five, six colds a year to take 3000 to 5000 milligrams of vitamin C a day. Most find that that dramatically reduces their frequency of colds. I am less convinced that vitamin C treats colds, but I think it definitely can be a preventive.

PLAYBOY: Dr. Linus Pauling was emphatic about vitamin C. Was he right?

WEIL: I'm very interested in his work, though I think he became a monomaniac about vitamin C toward the end of his life. I usually take 1000 or 1500 milligrams three times a day. He was taking 18,000 mg a day. But I'm a strong proponent of antioxidant therapy. Antioxidants are a group of vitamins and minerals that block oxidation reactions, and I think they give tremendous protection against cancer and heart disease, and they slow down aging. The ones I use are vitamin C, vitamin E, selenium and a mixed carotene supplement. I think everybody should. There are studies backing it up. You can't pick up a medical publication these days without seeing an article about new research on antioxidants.

PLAYBOY: At what point did you give up vegetarianism?

WEIL: I began eating fish about ten years ago, but that's all. I don't eat red meat or chicken or eggs. I eat a little bit of cheese. I like parmesan on pasta and a little mozzarella here and there.

PLAYBOY: Have you ever been to a McDonald's?

WEIL: I have never eaten a McDonald's hamburger. I think I am one of the few Americans who can say that. However, I have, when on the road, gone into a McDonald's to get a Coca-Cola. Once in a while I'll drink a Coke, and that's the only thing I've ever had in a McDonald's.

PLAYBOY: The fact that you drink Coke is surprising.

WEIL: Once in a while. I like drinking a Coke in front of people for shock value.

PLAYBOY: What do you have against coffee?

WEIL: Coffee can contribute to migraine headaches, anxiety, heart palpitations, insomnia, coronary heart disease and stomach disorders. If you need caffeine, stick to green tea.

PLAYBOY: Why green tea?

WEIL: It protects against cancer, lowers cholesterol and doesn't have the toxins coffee has.

PLAYBOY: How about decaf coffee?

WEIL: It's not safe. First of all, decaf retains enough caffeine to affect sensitive people. It also contains other substances naturally found in the coffee bean that can have irritating effects on the body. Decaffeinated coffee can be just as tough on the stomach as regular coffee.

PLAYBOY: What is your opinion of some of the popular diets? How about the Zone?

WEIL: It's a curious one. I don't think it is unhealthy, and it works for some people. The discussion about fats in the book is good, and Barry Sears is right to call people's attention to the fact that there are classes of carbohydrates that turn easily into blood sugar and might stress the pancreas: sugar, white flour, white breads. There are two things I don't like about the diet, though. Encouraging people to regard food as a drug is not healthy. Seeing food as a drug is what contributes to unhealthy ways of dealing with it. The other thing is that he notes, in fine print, that this diet applies to 25 percent of people and doesn't apply to another 25 percent of people, while the rest of us are somewhere in the middle. But the implication of the book is that it is the way everybody should be eating. It's not. It only works for some people.

PLAYBOY: How about popular diet pills?

WEIL: I don't like them. There's nothing new in them; they're a variation on the old theme of using stimulants to suppress appetite. It works temporarily, but you're certain to gain back the weight when you stop taking the drugs. And the side effects can be significant. The only

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use I see for them is to get someone started on a weight-loss program, if the person is committed to follow that with a healthy regimen to maintain the weight loss without drugs.

PLAYBOY: Which diets do you recommend?

WEIL: Everyone is different. For some, the Dean Ornish diet is going to work: very low fat, vegetarian. It's another of the latest fads out there and we'll see what happens. Pritikin's diet is good for some people. It's also very restrictive—good for people with heart disease, to reverse the blockage—so it's hard to follow. My problem with most diets is that people don't stick to them. I try to help people learn how to eat better in an ongoing way, a way that can become part of their lives.

PLAYBOY: You've also expressed concern about the effects of water and air on health. What can people do about that?

WEIL: You can do something about water: Use bottled water when you are on the road and get a water purifying system for your home. Air is tougher. Certain house plants are effective at removing pollution. You can also take antioxidants, which give you protection against problems that come from the environment.

PLAYBOY: In general, is the American diet and lifestyle a disaster?

WEIL: Yes, and we are pushing it all over the world now. But people are figuring out how to have less-stressful lives, and the American diet is getting better. People are much more sophisticated about food than when I was growing up. There is a big sushi restaurant in Tucson, where I live, and it seems to be most frequented by rednecks and cowboys. The sight of cowboys eating sushi is amazing. Who would have thought? At the same time, there is much, much greater consumption of fast foods and processed foods, and Americans eat enormous portions of food. So we are eating more of worse foods. There are McDonald's restaurants in hospitals now. The McDonald's corporation is inducing hospitals to put them in by giving them grants. That's a terrible trend. The love of beef is dangerous. Of all the animal foods, beef is probably the least healthy. At a restaurant in Texas, if you eat a 72-ounce steak by yourself, you get it for free. And people do it. It's the essence of the worst of the American diet. The fat in meat is the worst fat for hearts and arteries. In addition, cows are big animals at the top of a food chain, so they are likely to concentrate all the environmental toxins, plus they are given all these drugs, hormones and growth promoters. Steamed vegetables and fresh fruit, on the other hand, are not only nutritious but also can protect you against serious illness. Is that big steak worth it?

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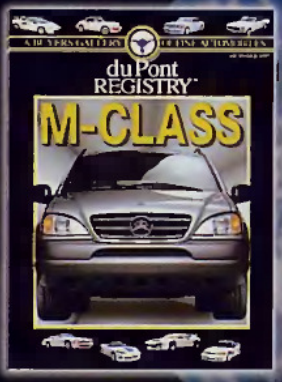

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Women BOXING (continued from page 124)

She won't have sex with other inmates. "It's weird in here," she confides. "I'm a lamb among wolves."

lockers. I'm sent outside twice—for keeping my sweater and my cash. They confiscate my pen and paper at the room where I'm inspected. I pull out my pockets, roll down my socks, lift up my tongue.

The visitors' room is loud, filled with low square tables and chairs. Inmates wear tan jumpsuits and paper slippers that they kick off like kids at the shore. They hold hands with their boyfriends on the tabletops. Their hands must be above their knees, in full view.

I wait a long time before anything happens. I think, Maybe they didn't tell her, to humiliate me. Or they did, and she's refused to come. Twenty minutes later, I see a radiant woman bound toward me. We clasp tightly, me more out of gratitude and relief, she out of grace.

She tells me her story. She was sharing a house in Queens with her uncle, a crack addict. It was a sting, the D.A. was involved. They found a tiny amount of crack in her upstairs bedroom, a room she shared with four other people. She had once been part of that life, but had found God and reformed. She was innocent, she'd appeal. She didn't feel resentment about the setup, only sorrow that people couldn't accept she had turned around her life.

Tyrene is a minor celebrity at Rikers—a champion. She keeps up a boxing regimen of sorts—running in place and hitting a metal door with a sock-wrapped hand for bagwork. She is proud of her taut belly and runs my hand up and down it.

She feels above the fray. A devout Christian, she doesn't smoke, drink or swear. She won't have sex with other inmates, though some women try to get her to. "It's weird in here," she confides. "I'm a lamb among wolves."

A guard announces visiting hour is over. Tyrene walks back toward the wings. She stops, pivots and runs to a table near the guard, where she had left something. I go to meet her and get hollered at. She hands me a brown paper bag and asks if I'll take it to her fiancé, a boxer at Gleason's Gym.

There is a feeling of dejection and loss while we wait in a line for the bus to arrive. I squat, braced against the chain-link fence, as if I have done it a thousand times.

I wait until I'm seated at the back of the bus to peek inside the bag: Cradled in clean cotton briefs is a soap sculpture, a figure wearing bag gloves, with the inscription: NO. 1 BOXER. JESUS LOVES YOU.

•

There's a party at Gleason's Gym for all the female winners of the Golden Gloves. Gleason's is New York's oldest and largest boxing gym, four rings in an industrial loft tucked under the Brooklyn Bridge. It has 62 trainers, and boxers come from all over to work out before a fight. The party is called for six P.M. on Friday night, and the girls troop upstairs, tottering in high heels, as gawky and shy as fillies. Their Golden Gloves pendants hang around their necks and get tangled when they hug hello.

Laid out on a check-in table is a long, white cake and Hawaiian Punch. I feel like I am at my Girl Scouts meeting in the Presbyterian church basement. The champs wolf down their food: They have been pigging out all week on pizza, soda, beer, nachos, ice cream and cookies. Next week they'll go back to training.

Tanya Dean arrives with her five-year-old son, Ricky. The boy beams about his mom's victory and his part in it: "I love her. I love how she fights. She fights good. I told her what she had to do."

The affable owner of Gleason's, Bruce Silverglade, is holed up in his office, on the phone to Denmark, trying to arrange a bout for Jill Matthews, the first woman to win at the finals when the Gloves opened to women in 1995. Four

How Hard Do They Hit?

I hooked up with Johnnie Woluewich at the Elks Lodge in Elmhurst, Queens on Friday, September 5. USA Boxing Metropolitan of New York, of which Johnnie is a board member, was co-sponsoring an evening of bouts that pitted New York Golden Gloves winners against New Jersey Golden Gloves winners.

The air in this fabled venue was acrid with cigar smoke, hot dogs and beer. We were waiting for a substitute fight doctor to arrive (the scheduled one had been in an accident) and had plenty of time to continue our dialogue on women and men and the sport of boxing.

Woluewich had fought 17 professional fights as a superbantamweight—more or less my weight class, so my competitive juices were stirred. I posed a question: "Johnnie, I'm roughly your weight. What are the chances that I could knock you out?"

He laughed and said, "Not much." Woluewich says there's no way a woman can hit as hard as a man of equal weight—at least not yet. Women are not that far along in the sport. He feels that, as in track and field, they're slowly creeping up to the men but will never quite be on a par. Their arm strength could conceivably be equal, but not their pectorals. "Women have breasts and those muscles don't develop as much as men's," he says. "They're all fat."

Still, I was taught that punching power derives not from the chest or arms but from the base of the body. Woluewich concurred, adding, "That's why plyometrics are so important." Plyometrics are exercises that build leg and hip strength—to allow for short bursts of activity and power. Cuban boxers are plyometric zealots, squatting and leaping for two hours each day before tackling roadwork or sparring. Maybe that's why they're so good: Executed properly, a punch that starts at the toes and travels up the calves and hamstrings and into the pelvic area delivers a wallop. (Technically, my well-muscled gams and Hungarian peasant-stock flanks should help me here.)

Trying to gain some advantage, I pressed Woluewich: "Then what would it take for me to knock you out?" He says that if a man has no defenses, and if he's hit with a number of combinations, he'll most likely topple. Johnnie has a theory: A guy with weak neck muscles is most vulnerable. He tells me there are two ways to get knocked out—taking a direct hit to the skull or getting your neck snapped. The latter cuts off circulation to the head. "Your brain stops for a second. It makes you drowsy and you drop."

That's why fierce uppercuts and hooks are in the coveted arsenal of the world's most feared boxers. (Remember Mike?) And it's not the blow to the jaw or chin that's so deadly: "It's the head spinning that knocks you out."

For this reason, the all-important "iron chin" is a misnomer. "It should be an 'iron neck'," says Woluewich.

More reasons to do those neck rolls, fellas. —A.H.

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are you ready to box, men?

suck in your gut and read this

"Anyone can box," says Terry Claybon of the incomparable Hollywood Boxing Gym in Los Angeles. "You just have to take it at your own pace."

I called Terry, my own trainer, to find out how PLAYBOY's readers might get in shape for a boxing workout. (This is a little like straightening up before the cleaning lady arrives.) What Claybon said surprised me. Apparently, there's no way to prepare, because the training is so different from that required in other sports. His best advice before you get in the ring: Keep an open mind.

We assume you're not 50 pounds overweight and smoking three packs a day. Let's say you're in decent shape and you're ready to begin training. (No more excuses.) Claybon says you must be able to run one to two miles (you can even walk at a fast clip: "It doesn't have to be vicious"), do reasonable abdominal work (100 sit-ups or crunches) and do ten to 20 push-ups.

In the gym, weight training is OK if you're trying to tone, but use lighter weights and do more repetitions. Bulk does not help in the ring. As Claybon says, "You need to be fast and loose."

Terry does pull-ups (for lats and biceps), dips (for triceps), push-ups (for pecs) and natural squats (for legs). Beginners should start out with five to ten repetitions and work up to three sets of ten each.

For machine addicts, Terry likes the Versa Climber, which approximates climbing a ladder in quicksand with a gorilla on your back. Make the resistance higher for a power workout; lower for speed. The Versa Climber also helps develop your cardiac recovery rate. Alternate 30 seconds of work with 15 seconds' rest, building up to five minutes total. This mimics the intense three-minute round and one minute of rest found in boxing gyms everywhere.

While some gym rats prefer to regulate their cardiovascular workouts on a treadmill, Terry favors doing roadwork the old-fashioned way: on the road. He says, "It's more exciting to go freelance—you can move more, react, shadowbox."

Claybon strongly recommends working with a trainer to avoid developing bad habits that are hard to break. His basic ten-round boxing workout goes something like this:

Stretching: for at least five minutes.

Jumping rope: one round (three minutes). Helps build stamina, leg muscles, coordination, timing. Novice women like it better than novice men—perhaps it's schoolgirls' nostalgia. Some prefer to end their routine with the rope; we use it as a warm-up.

Footwork: one round. Sequences of defensive moves: pivots, slips, rows and feints together with a series of basic combinations.

Shadowboxing: one round. That cool thing boxers do before a fight. When we do it, we feel like idiots, but it's the single best thing to do for form. And, yes, do it in front of a mirror.

Focus mitts: three rounds. You need a trainer for this. He slips his hands into two big pads that he holds in front of you while you practice throwing punches at them. As you get better, he starts tapping you back, to build your defensive skills. One step away from actual sparring.

Bagwork: two rounds. The meat and potatoes of the boxer's workout. Done on a heavy bag (or, if you're Rocky, a side of beef) attached by a chain to the ceiling. Used for practicing all combinations. Builds hand speed, stamina and power.

Double-end bag: one round. Also known as the crazy bag. A bladder-shaped bulk attached by a cord to the ceiling, and at the other end, to the floor. Used mostly to practice clean, straight punches. A glancing blow causes it to wobble in a loopy arc that makes it impossible to hit (and thus makes you crazy).

Speed bag: one round. Pure showmanship, some say. But we love that staccato blur. Helps rhythm, hand-eye coordination, speed and, on a simple level, forces you to keep your hands up.

Abdominals: 400—of various persuasions. Old-fashioned gyms still use a medicine ball: Your trainer throws the equivalent of 15 pounds of birdseed at your stomach to toughen you up. It seems dumb until you start to spar and nearly faint when your opponent "goes downstairs." It's the body blows that really slow you down, not the ones to the head.

Neck rolls: three sets of ten. To strengthen that thing supporting your head. Right up there with roadwork among boxers' least favorite exercises.

Push-ups: 20, minimum. Do them correctly: Slowly, head up, back and legs straight. (Do them on your knees at your own peril.)

FIGHTING SHAPE

If you can do all this, you're in sparring shape. You'll be in the gym three days a week. To move on to the next stage—fighting shape—plan to spend five days in the gym, and spar every other day for four rounds. I thought I was in shape until I started to spar; then I took to my bed for two days. The ante is ratcheted up by a few things: the weight of the gloves (anywhere from 12 to 16 ounces), your adrenaline level and, mostly, confronting a moving target that's trying to hit you back. Suddenly, everything you've learned goes out the window. You can move, but you can't throw a punch. Or you flail wildly and forget to bob and weave. You finally understand how interminable a minute is, and why there's so much clinching: You would do anything to steal a few seconds of rest.

Sparring is what separates the men from the boys. Unless you're willing to give and take a punch, don't go there. And while headgear is standard, you can still get a black eye or fat lip. So lay off the day before you're getting married or arguing your first case before the Supreme Court.

For extra-credit students only: Fighting trim is as different from sparring as sparring is from training. This is why men have retired to monastery-like camps in the weeks before a fight, refusing mail, calls, wives and girlfriends. The theory that engaging in sexual activity before a bout drains one of vital fluids (or, in the vernacular, juice) is now generally pooh-poohed. It's still the chase that's enervating. So no drinking, no late-night carousing. Everything Aunt Mabel said is true: Early to bed, early to rise. Eat well: Everything should be steamed or baked; no fried foods, no sweets. Drink plenty of fluids. Sleep a full eight hours a night, and whenever you're fatigued, rest. In short, be a good soldier. As Terry says, "Your body is preparing for war." —A.H.

months later she went pro, but with so few women in her division, she's had only three fights. And at 33, she realizes her career is running out of time. She needs this fight.

Jill is a scrappy, 5'3", 106-pound ball of fire with a tumble of strawberry-blonde ringlets. She's a hairdresser and Hunter College student originally from Chelsea. She fronts a punk rock band with her ex-boyfriend on bass and her husband (an attorney and rabbi's son) on drums.

Boxing, she says, is the "punk rock of sports. It's aggressive." Jill has no patience for less-experienced women who hold out for more money before they fight. She gets crazy when people ask, "What's a nice Jewish girl doing in the ring?" While she hopes the day will come when women will be fully accepted, she says that on that day she'll quit: "It won't be cool anymore."

Predictions for the future of women's boxing run the gamut. Mickey Rosario of Thomas Jefferson feels it will always be a sideshow. My trainer, Terry Claybon, thinks there will be superstars in three or four different weight classes, but it won't be widespread. USA Boxing's Johnnie Woluewich, and Bruce Silverglade, promoter and gym owner, are optimistic: They're encouraged by the recent explosion and feel it will continue.

If my experience is any measure, the future looks good. Women like boxing for the physical training. Most of us have been martial artists or have played a rough team sport such as soccer or basketball. We find boxing's mental challenges appealing: the dedication and commitment it commands, the need to outsmart our opponents, the confrontations with our weaknesses. Joe Louis, speaking of his 1946 fight with Billy Conn, said, "He can run, but he can't hide." The same might be said for character: Whatever blocks you have, whatever demons, you'll face them in the ring and they'll be the greater enemies.

We like ourselves better in the ring. We are focused but relaxed. We use strategy but rely on instinct. We are in tune with our own rhythms. We feel both invincible and humble.

We get to ask the larger questions: When weary, can I go the distance? Can I take it on the chin? What happens when my game plan is challenged? If I'm beaten to the punch, do I fold or do I parry? If I'm down for the count, do I get up? Boxing may play on our worst fears of annihilation. But some of us like to be scared. And, in truth, I am less frightened stepping into the ring than I am walking to a meeting on a studio lot. It's cleaner, more honest, more real.

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COLLEGE BASKETBALL *(continued from page 144)*

Maybe Pitino was frustrated because his players couldn't resist the NBA. Pitino is now a Lexington legend.

Louis Bullock, one of the best outside players in college, as well as 6'8", 300-plus-pound Playboy All-America Robert Traylor inside. Six-nine string bean Maceo Baston rebounds well but needs to improve his medium-range jumper, while senior Jerod Ward is still struggling to prove he deserved the national player of the year title in high school four years ago. The Wolverines suffered from inconsistency and a lack of depth last year. They could have the same problems this season.

(10) KENTUCKY

Having rebuilt the Wildcats into a national power and with an NCAA championship in his pocket, Rick Pitino once again succumbed to the glamour and money of the NBA. Or maybe he was frustrated because some of his highly recruited players couldn't resist the lure of the NBA, leaving before their college eligibility expired. Pitino is now a Lexington legend. Enter Tubby Smith, former Pitino assistant, most recently head coach at Georgia and now the first black coach at Kentucky. Smith isn't intimidated by Pitino's legacy, making him the perfect choice to keep the Wildcats on top of the heap. While lots of good players have left Lexington in the past two years, there are still a few left. Guard Wayne Turner should fill some of the void left by Ron Mercer's early exit. Jeff Sheppard's return after a year on redshirt will also help. Forward Scott Padgett is back, as are big men Jamaal Magloire and Nazr Mohammed.

(11) XAVIER

The already quick Musketeers will be quicker with freshmen guards Alvin Brown and Maurice McAfee, both of whom could see considerable playing time despite the return of junior guard tandem Lenny Brown and Gary Lumpkin. Skip Prosser, entering his fourth year as coach, has addressed one of his team's few weaknesses from last season with the addition of 6'9" postman Reggie Butler. The return of a healthy Nate Turner (6'8") won't hurt either. With the team coming off a 23–6 season and a 13th place finish in the AP final poll, Prosser has dreams of San Antonio.

(12) CLEMSON

Already one of the hottest coaches in the nation, Rick Barnes will only get hotter this year as Clemson tries to improve on its 23–10 performance of last season. The Tigers are bigger, stronger and deeper than last year. Seven-one freshman Adam Allenspach will give Barnes another big body inside, while freshman Jason Pryor and Temple transfer Johnny Miller will share time at the guard spot opposite Terrell McIntyre (13.4 ppg). There's also all-conference forward Greg Buckner (15.4 ppg). The Tigers, who averaged less than 13 turnovers a game, don't beat themselves.

(13) ST. JOHN'S

With a year of experience under his belt and two talented seniors trying to catch the eye of the NBA, coach Fran Fraschilla could get St. John's back on the track that made it the nation's fourth winningest program. There was some question about Zendon Hamilton's SAT scores, but the Playboy All-America is clearly one of the best big men in college basketball this year. And while 6'6" Felipe Lopez may not have lived up to the hype in the New York press during high school, he's had a respectable collegiate career, capped by a 15.9-points-per-game average last season. Two recruits, Ron Artest and Shannon Crooks, should make important contributions as the Red Storm tries to blow away its competition in the Big East.

(14) HAWAII

For Western Athletic Conference opponents, a visit to the islands wasn't exactly a pleasurable experience last season. The Rainbows, under ten-year coach Riley Wallace, played tenacious defense en route to a 21–8 season that took them to the second round of the NIT. Four starters from that team return, including the lethal guard combo of Anthony Carter (18.7 ppg) and Alika Smith (17.9 ppg). Wallace will also bring in seven-foot Bryan Moeller to replace graduated Seth Sundberg in the middle.

(15) MARYLAND

Despite the fact that Keith Booth has taken his 19.5-points-per-game average to the NBA, Maryland coach Gary Williams has his deepest team since taking over in College Park eight years ago. The junior trio of Terrell Stokes, Laron Profit and Obinna Ekezie give the Terps a good floor leader, an explosive scorer and power on the inside. Freshmen Terence Morris and Mike Mardesich (the latter is Maryland's first seven-footer) will give Williams a minimum eight-man rotation. The Terps are Top 25 material and yet may finish no better than fourth in the ACC.

(16) MISSISSIPPI

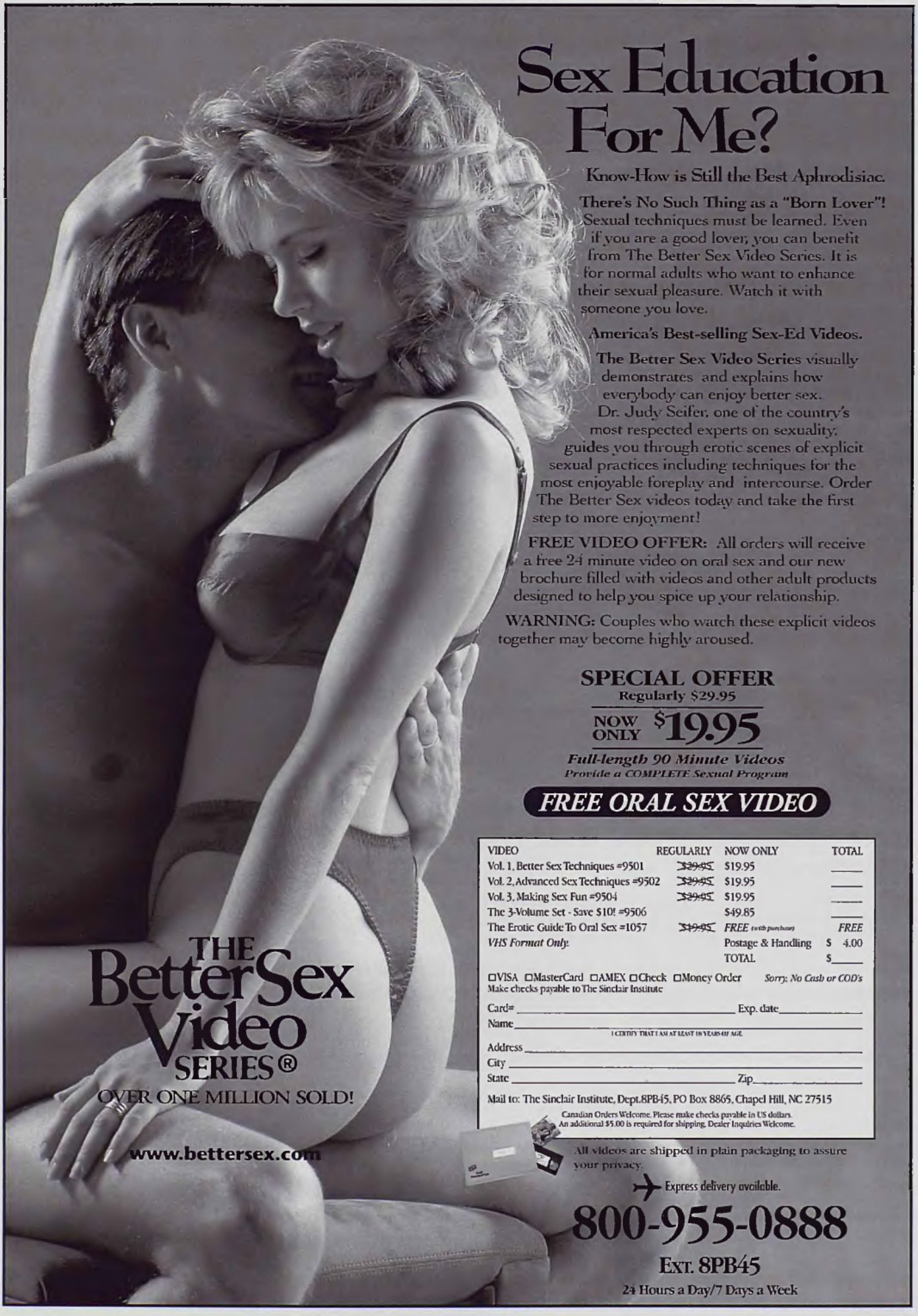
Looking for a dark horse team and player to root for? Try Ole Miss and 6'9" senior forward Ansu Sesay, who is almost certain to build on his 14.8 ppg and 7.9

ANSON MOUNT SCHOLAR/ATHLETE

The Anson Mount Scholar/Athlete Award recognizes achievement both in the classroom and on the basketball court. Nominated by their colleges, the candidates are judged on their scholastic and athletic accomplishments by the editors of PLAYBOY. The award winner attends PLAYBOY's preseason All-America Weekend (held this year in Chicago), receives a commemorative medallion and is included in the team photograph published in the magazine. In addition, PLAYBOY awards $5000 to the general scholarship fund of the winner's school.

This year's Anson Mount Scholar/Athlete Award in basketball goes to Drew Hansen from the University of Utah. A 6'5" senior, Hansen, one of the team's top defensive specialists, has played every position on the floor (except center) for coach Rick Majerus. He was named to the GTE Academic All-District Team and is a three-time member of the All-WAC Academic Team. His major is political science and his overall GPA is 3.99 on a scale of 4.0.

Honorable mentions: Scott Cross (Texas–Arlington), Ryan Robertson (Kansas), T.J. Lux (Northern Illinois), Dan Muller (Illinois State), Marius Janulis (Syracuse), Kenny Van Kirk (Boise State), Colin Ducharme (Virginia), Jess Settles (Iowa), Alexander Koul (George Washington), Stefan Ciosici (Lafayette), Mike Freeman (Air Force), Rahsaan Mitchell (Chicago State), Greg Gaffney (Drexel), Gregg Sawyer (Wyoming), Matt Harpring (Georgia Tech), Pete Lisicky (Penn State), Andrew McFalls (Winthrop), Ross Land (Northern Arizona), Brandy Perryman (Texas), Whit Hughes (Mississippi State), Micah Marsh (Arkansas State), Damian Owens (West Virginia), Anthony Boone (Mississippi), Michael Ruffin (Tulsa), Andy Markowski (Nebraska), Steve Goodrich (Princeton).



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rpg averages of last season. And Mississippi, which won the SEC West regular division title last year, hopes to repeat the feat. Sixth-year coach Rob Evans has four more returning starters to go with Sesay, and he thinks freshman point guard Jason Flanigan will see lots of playing time.

(17) SYRACUSE

The Orangemen should be able to bounce back from an uncharacteristic season (19–13) that saw them fail to win 20 games for the first time since 1981–1982. With a year's experience under his belt, Jason Hart will be more adept at point guard. Forwards Todd Burgan (15.1 ppg) and Marius Janulis are both returning starters. Syracuse has plenty of size at center with 6'9" Etan Thomas and 6'11" Elvir Ovcina. Expect Jim Boeheim to nudge his team toward the 24 wins they have averaged during his 21-year coaching tenure.

(18) IOWA

Two years ago Jess Settles thought he might be headed early to the NBA. When his tryout at the NBA camp didn't go well, he decided to return to Iowa City for his senior year. An injury cut short that season, but a medical redshirt allows him to return this year. His success may determine whether the Hawkeyes have a good or a great season. The other key for coach Tom Davis is finding a suitable replacement for graduated point guard Andre Woolridge. Davis has added freshmen Ricky Davis and Dean Oliver, both of whom are bound to get time in Davis' use-the-bench rotation system.

(19) ARKANSAS

The effects of a 16-month NCAA investigation that cost Arkansas its top scorer (Sunday Adebayo) and rebounder (Jesse Pate) midseason two years ago are still being felt by coach Nolan Richardson and his Razorbacks team. "The cloud is gone, since three of the seven allegations were dropped—and we were not even put on probation," says Richardson. "However, the effect lingers in terms of our ability to recruit blue-chip players." Even with just 11 scholarship players last year, Richardson was able to guide the Razorbacks to an 8–8 SEC mark, 18–14 overall. With guards Kareem Reid, who last season led the SEC in assists, and three-point threat Pat Bradley, Arkansas will continue to have a perimeter-oriented attack. The success of seven-foot freshman Jason Jennings in the middle will determine whether the Razorbacks are just another good SEC team or are ready to return to national prominence.

(20) GEORGIA

Bulldogs athletic director Vince Dooley opted for continuity by promoting assistant Ron Jirsa to coach when Tubby Smith packed his bags for Kentucky. Jirsa, who turns 38 this month and has never had a head coaching job, had the support of the players, most of whom return from last season. Georgia had no star player under Smith, instead relying on overall balance and a ferocious team defense. Jirsa will employ the same philosophy. Freshman leaper Jumaine Jones could break into the opening-game starting lineup.

(21) TEMPLE

Coach John Chaney had the planets aligned for a run at the national title until junior center Marc Jackson took an early exit to the NBA. Chaney, however, has plenty of firepower left: Starting guards Rasheed Brokenborough and Juan "Pepe" Sanchez return, and Quincy Wadley and Malik Moore are now eligible after sitting out last season under NCAA academic restrictions. Freshman Lynn Greer is a point guard deluxe, having finished as the number two all-time scorer in Philadelphia high school history (Wilt Chamberlain is number one).

(22) STANFORD

With all starters except Brevin Knight returning, we should soon see how important the 5'10" All-America point guard was to the 22–8 success of Stanford. Coach Mike Montgomery will shift Arthur Lee from his off-guard starting spot and hopes Kamba Tshionyi and highly recruited freshman Michael McDonald can provide backup. The focus of the Cardinals attack will shift inside, where 7'1" junior center Tim Young has a chance to be one of college basketball's dominant big men.

(23) UNC-CHARLOTTE

With two of Conference USA's best players returning (guard Sean Colson and forward DeMarco Johnson), plus a

THE PLAYBOY ALL-AMERICAS

LUTE OLSON, our College Basketball Coach of the Year, completed his 14th season at Arizona by leading the Wildcats to their first NCAA national championship. Olson's reign in Tucson has included 13 consecutive NCAA tournaments, plus two previous Final Four appearances and seven Pac Ten titles. With a career coaching record of 533 wins against 202 losses, Olson is the first coach in the 20-year history of the Playboy All-Americas to be honored as Coach of the Year a second time, the first occurring in 1990.

MILES SIMON—Guard, 6'5", senior, Arizona. Averaged 22 points a game during the NCAA tournament, topped by a career-high 30-point performance against Kentucky in the national championship game. Already has 1063 career points.

MIKE BIBBY—Guard, 6'1", sophomore, Arizona. Averaged 18 points, 4.8 rebounds and 3.3 assists per game during the NCAA tournament. Named Pac Ten Freshman of the Year.

PAUL PIERCE—Guard, 6'7", junior, Kansas. The most valuable player in the Big 12 conference tournament, he led KU in scoring in all of the Jayhawks' six postseason games.

BJ MCKIE—Guard, 6'2", junior, South Carolina. A first-team All-SEC selection, he averaged 17.4 points and 2.7 assists per game. Only the fourth player in Gamecocks history with 1000 points after two seasons.

ANTAWN JAMISON—Forward, 6'9", junior, North Carolina. A two-time All-ACC selection, he averaged 19.1 points and 9.4 rebounds per game last season. Has 1152 career points in two seasons.

ROBERT TRAYLOR—Forward, 6'8", junior, Michigan. Averaged 18.2 points and 8.4 rebounds in five postseason NIT games. Led his team in rebounds and blocks for the season.

KENNY THOMAS—Forward, 6'8", junior, New Mexico. Has averaged 14.3 points and 7.3 rebounds in his two-year career with the Lobos. Will break 1000-point and 500-rebound career marks this season.

RAEF LAFRENTZ—Forward, 6'11", senior, Kansas. Big 12 Conference Player of the Year last season, he led his team in scoring (18.5 points per game) and rebounding (9.3 per game). A two-time Playboy All-America, he has started all 101 games in his three-year KU career.

TODD MACCULLOCH—Center, 7', junior, Washington. The best big man in the Pac Ten by the end of last season, he led the nation in field goal shooting.

ZENDON HAMILTON—Center, 6'11", senior, St. John's. Led his team in scoring (16.2 points per game) and rebounding (9.4 per game). Already ranks 13th on school's all-time scoring list with 1318 points.

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strong bench, second-year coach Melvin Watkins isn't concerned that the 49ers are thrust into the role of conference favorite: "No one plays the game to not finish first. I'm not worried about it." Watkins' carefree attitude is no doubt bolstered by the addition of Division I transfer Kelvin Price and juco transfer Galen Young, both explosive players, plus recruits Marlon Thomas, Diego Guevara and Charles Hayward, all likely to contribute in their first season.

(24) ST. JOSEPH'S

The Hawks will rely on the dynamite backcourt combination of Rashid Bey and Arthur "Yah" Davis to defend the Atlantic Ten conference tourney championship they won last season. Coach Phil Martelli, who has already posted 45 wins in two seasons, expects Frank Wilkins, a 6'9" redshirt freshman who plays a solid perimeter game, and Damien Reid, a top Canadian high schooler last year, to contribute as well.

(25) MARQUETTE

Even coach Mike Deane was surprised when Marquette sailed through the Conference USA tournament last year, winning four games in four days and trouncing strong Cincinnati and UNC–Charlotte teams en route to the conference tourney championship. Deane attributes much of that success to what he calls his "midget" backcourt, the tandem of Aaron Hutchins and Marcus West, both 5'10" wonder kids who return for their senior seasons. Point producers Anthony Pieper and Chris Crawford have graduated. With a lack of noticeable talent in the paint, Marquette will have to sprint its way to another NCAA bid and a fourth consecutive 20-win season since Deane took over the program.

(26) VALPARAISO

What's the only school in the nation to win both its conference regular season and tournament titles in each of the past three seasons? That's right—Valparaiso. The Crusaders' Mr. Everything, guard Bryce Drew, is back for his senior season, giving his team a solid shot at four in a row. The best thing about Drew, who averaged 19.9 points per game and will undoubtedly become the school's all-time scoring leader before season's end, is that he makes his teammates better. Two seven-footers in the middle, Antanas Vilcinskas and Zoran Viskovic, will muscle plenty of rebounds and twist the tongues of plenty of announcers.

(27) CONNECTICUT

Any time UConn coach Jim Calhoun gets all five starters back from the previous year you can be certain the Huskies will be at or near the top of the Big East conference standings by the end of the season. The flashy guard-forward combination of Richard Hamilton and Rashamel Jones is the best of the group, none of whom are yet seniors. Big Souleymane Wane (6'11") becomes eligible on December 20.

(28) LOUISVILLE

Rumors continue to circulate that this will be Denny Crum's last season as coach at Louisville. What has he left to prove after winning 20 or more victories in 21 of his 26 seasons, advancing to the Final Four six times and winning two national championships (1980 and 1986)? Crum will likely add another 20-win total this year, even though lightning-quick DeJuan Wheat has graduated. USC transfer Cameron Murray is Crum's choice to replace point guard Wheat. There won't be any superstars among the Cardinals this year, but there are enough solid all-round players to enable Louisville to land its predictable NCAA berth.

(29) UTAH

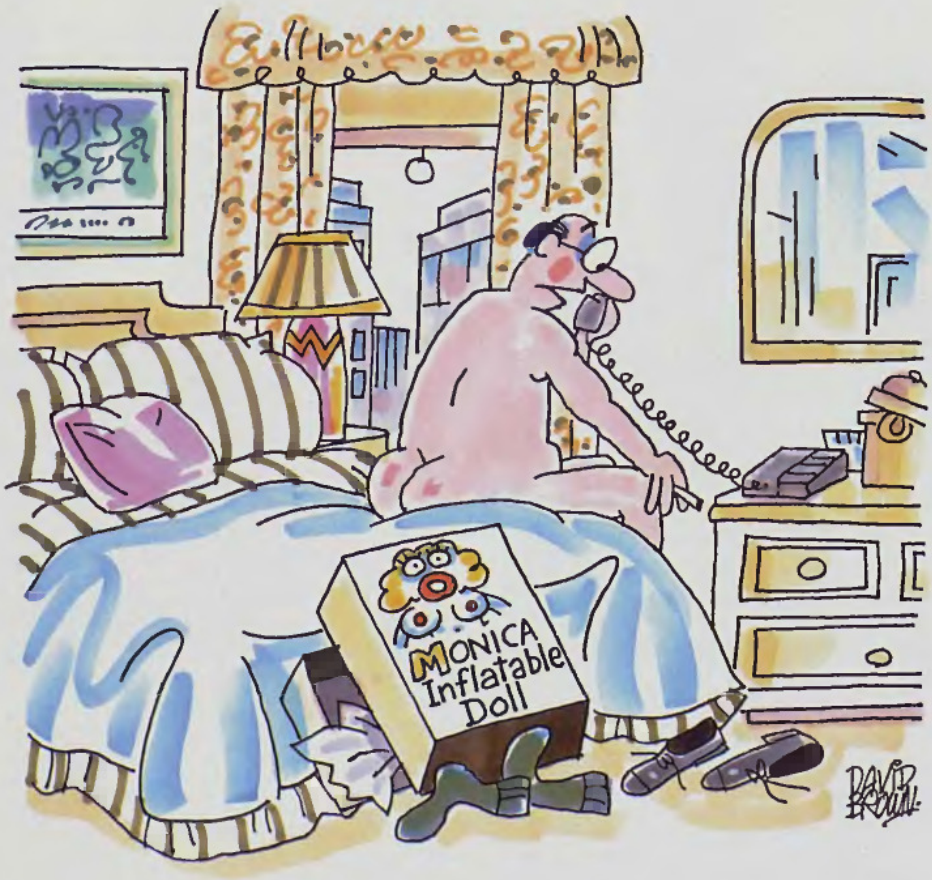
Coach Rick Majerus is certain that life without All-America Keith Van Horn will be a little more stressful. After all, Van Horn led the Utes in points and rebounds the past four seasons. But basketball players are like good meals for the optimistic coach: As soon as you're done with one, you start looking forward to the next. Michael Doleac will be Utah's prize this year. Majerus thinks the 6'11" senior center (14.4 ppg and 7.7 rpg) still has tons of untapped potential. Freshman Britton Johnsen and sophomore Alex Jensen, just returned from a two-year church mission, should also figure in Majerus' recipe for success.

(30) ILLINOIS STATE

Coach Kevin Stallings expects the Redbirds to fly to another NCAA bid on the wings of a 14-man roster that returns intact from a 24-win record last season. Best of the Birds is 6'6" junior forward Rico Hill, who averaged 18.8 points and 8.2 rebounds last season. While ISU lacks height at center, it has beef in 6'7" LeRoy Watkins, who weighs in at 265.

(31) CINCINNATI

With Danny Fortson skipping his senior season to go to the NBA and four-year starting guard Damon Flint graduated, Bob Huggins will have to rely on every bit of his coaching skill and drill-sergeant discipline to keep the Bearcats among the nation's basketball elite. The offense will revolve around 6'6" forward Ruben Patterson and juco transfer Michael Horton, who will likely play point guard. Center Kenyon Martin can be a force on defense in the paint. On paper, the Bearcats don't appear to have



"So, after I bit her on the ass she whirled around the ceiling and flew out the window."

enough talent to keep them in the Top 50. Huggins, however, will find a way to get them there.

(32) ILLINOIS

The feeling in Champaign is that Lon Kruger has turned the corner after only one season as coach at Illinois. The Illini, who won more than 20 games (22–10) for the first time since 1991, went strictly up-tempo offensively, relying on quickness and a perimeter game to compensate for their lack of height. With only three players over 6'6", the formula will remain the same. Kruger will have Jelani Boline and Matt Heldman, seniors, share time as point guard in the spot that has been vacated by graduated Kiwane Garris. The return of a healthy Jerry Hester, who missed all but five games last season because of back surgery, will help.

(33) FLORIDA STATE

Sensing that he might be on shaky ground at Florida State despite a second-place finish to Michigan in the postseason NIT, Pat Kennedy moved north to take over a foundering DePaul program. The Seminoles quickly tabbed Steve Robinson, formerly with Tulsa, as their new coach. Robinson's sense of timing looks good: FSU returns four starters and a decent bench, and it adds junior college transfer All-America Terrell Baker and Kentucky transfer Oliver Simmons. A fifth-place finish in the ACC will still get them an invitation to the Big Dance.

(34) TEXAS

The Longhorns have reached the NCAA tournament in eight of nine seasons since Tom Penders took over as coach. Despite the loss of guard Reggie Freeman and strongman Dennis Jordan, Texas and Penders should gain their ninth tourney berth this season. Penders will blend the skills of three returning starters with the potential of a recruiting class he regards as his best since he arrived in Austin. Five of six of his new players are 6'8" or taller, and one, 7' Chris Mihm, is regarded as one of the top center prospects in the nation.

(35) INDIANA

This season should answer the question on the minds of so many Indiana basketball fans: Can Bob Knight still coach winning basketball? Last season, the coach saw his team come apart after a strong start. Knight appeared to have given up by the time Indiana played and lost to Colorado (80–62) in the first round of the NCAA tournament. Afterward (depending on who you believe), starting guard Neil Reed was forced out, quit or wasn't invited back for his senior year. If everyone else shows up for the season, Indiana should have a very good team. A.J. Guyton was Big Ten freshman of the year. Andrae Patterson has proved he can have big games (39 points against Duke), though not consistently. Luke Recker, Indiana's high school Mr. Basketball, should contribute as a freshman. Knight is bringing in two junior college players, William Gladness and Rob Turner, who should figure in the rotation. An unsuccessful season could end with Knight throwing in the towel.

(36) SOUTH CAROLINA

The 15–1 Gamecocks flew to an SEC title last year on the play of the best trio of guards in the nation. Larry Davis has graduated from that group but Playboy All-America BJ McKie returns, as does Melvin Watson. Six-eleven senior Ryan Stack and senior forward William Gallman will provide the muscle up front, and coach Eddie Fogler has brought in

REST OF THE BEST

GUARDS: Trajan Langdon (Duke), Vince Carter, Shammond Williams (North Carolina), Rashid Bey (St. Joseph's), Tyson Wheeler (Rhode Island), Rasheed Brokenborough (Temple), Lenny Brown (Xavier), Donnie Carr (La Salle), Shaheen Holloway (Seton Hall), Louis Bullock (Michigan), A.J. Guyton (Indiana), Tyronn Lue (Nebraska), Corey Brewer (Oklahoma), Cory Carr (Texas Tech), Earl Boykins (Eastern Michigan), Bryce Drew (Valparaiso), Charles Jones (Long Island), Toby Bailey (UCLA), Chris Herren (Fresno State), Kris Clack (Texas), De'Teri Mayes (Murray State).

FORWARDS: Laron Profit (Maryland), Matt Harpring (Georgia Tech), Pat Garrity (Notre Dame), Todd Burgan (Syracuse), Sam Jacobson (Minnesota), Sam Okey (Wisconsin), DeMarco Johnson (North Carolina–Charlotte), Bonzi Wells (Ball State), Michael Dickerson (Arizona), J.R. Henderson (UCLA), Ansu Sesay (Mississippi), Horatio Webster (Mississippi State), Clayton Shields (New Mexico), Yegor Mescheriakov (George Washington).

CENTERS: Lari Ketner (Massachusetts), Alexander Koul (George Washington), Brad Miller (Purdue), Evan Eschmeyer (Northwestern), Brian Skinner (Baylor), Danny Moore (Southwest Missouri State), A.J. Bramlett (Arizona), Jelani McCoy (UCLA), Tim Young (Stanford), Brad Millard (St. Mary's), Michael Doleac (Utah), Keon Clark (UNLV).

"It seems to Mr. Jenkins that Miss December has been a rather naughty girl this year."

Do drink responsibly, won't you?

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transfers Recus Nix and LeRon Williams (who played two years at Florida).

(37) PRINCETON

Former longtime coach Pete Carril always believed Princeton's winning system was more important than any one player. It may be that it was more important than the coach as well. Carril assistant Bill Carmody took over the program last season. The Tigers never missed a beat, breezing to a 14–0 Ivy League title and finishing the year 24–4. What is the system? Shoot well (50 percent overall, 38 percent from the three-point line), play superior defense (the Tigers led the nation in scoring defense) and don't waste energy showboating (the team had 244 three-pointers but only five dunks last season). With that formula seemingly locked in, it shouldn't matter that Ivy player of the year Sydney Johnson has graduated. Carmody will simply plug another player into the system.

(38) BUTLER

The Bulldogs waited 35 years for the NCAA tournament bid that finally came last season after a school-record 23 wins and a Midwestern Conference crown. Now Butler fans are chanting "Repeat!" Conference player of the year Jon Neuhouser returns, as does 7'2" shot blocker Rolf van Rijn. If coach Barry Collier can find a replacement for graduated guard Kelsey Wilson, Bulldogs fans should get their wish.

(39) WISCONSIN

There's no question that Dick Bennett is one of the best college coaches in the game. He proved that by repeatedly leading little Wisconsin–Green Bay to the NCAA tournament. Entering his third season at Madison, he has begun to attract the sort of talent that could lead the Badgers to even greater heights. Bennett's best player at the moment is junior forward Sam Okey, who has the potential to get even better. Freshmen Mark Vershaw and Charlie Wills will get playing time despite the return of a group of veterans from last year's 18-win team.

(40) GEORGE WASHINGTON

College basketball's Mutt and Jeff act is back for another season: 5'4" Shawnta Rogers is the NCAA's best lilliputian point guard since Mugsy Boggs, but 7'1" Russian Alexander Koul is still more potential than performance. Forward Yegor Mescheriakov, the Colonials' leading scorer (16.6 ppg) last season, is only a junior. And coach Mike Jarvis speaks glowingly about promising forward Pat Ngongba, who was forced to sit out his first year.

(41) RHODE ISLAND

Jim Harrick was too good a coach and person not to get another coaching opportunity after UCLA dismissed him for alleged expense account irregularities. Harrick, whose 17-year coaching record is 358–160 and includes an NCAA championship with the Bruins in 1995, not only gets a second life at Rhode Island, he also gets an excellent basketball team. The Rams, who won 20 games last season, return guard Tyson Wheeler (16.4 ppg) and three other starters, plus 6'9" Purdue transfer Luther Clay, who steps into the center spot vacated by graduated Michael Andersen.

(42) NEBRASKA

Coach Danny Nee thinks that his team will once again be solid defensively and strong on the boards despite the graduation of 6'11" center Mikki Moore, the one departed starter from last season's 18–15 squad. He expects 6'10" junior Venson Hamilton to provide the muscle inside, while he describes point guard Tyronn Lue as one of the quicker players in the nation. The Cornhuskers need better play from the bench and improved accuracy from the three-point line if they are to offer any sort of serious challenge to conference favorites Kansas and Texas.

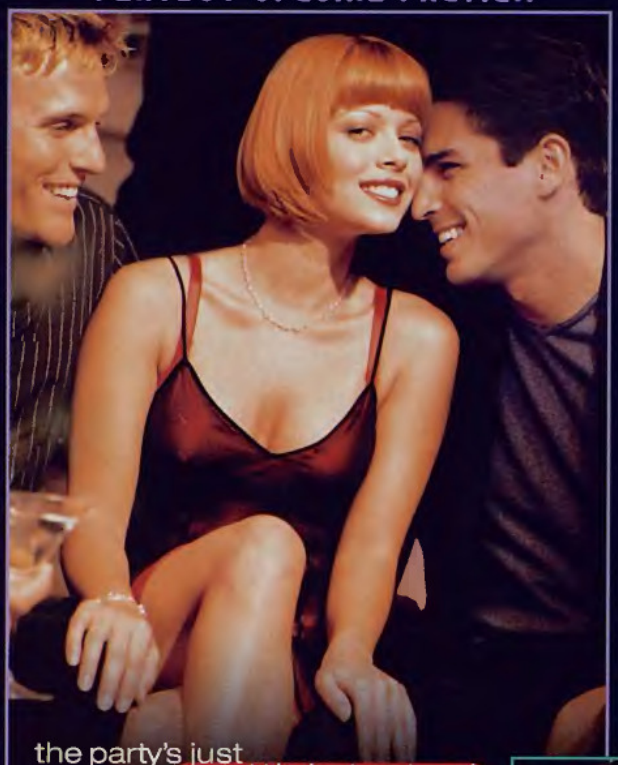
Cole's ALL-NAME TEAM

Devonaiare Deas Florida State	Michael Jordan Pennsylvania
Attila Cosby Pittsburgh	Michael Jordan Detroit Mercy
Lucky Grundy Cal State–Northridge	Ansu Sesay Mississippi
Duany Duany Wisconsin	Oral Roberts Mississippi State
Cookie Belcher Nebraska	omm'A Givens Pepperdine

(43) NEW MEXICO

With four starters returning from last season's 25–8 team, including Playboy All-America Kenny Thomas and 6'8" senior Clayton Shields (15.5 ppg), coach Dave Bliss thinks the Lobos should get beyond the second round of the NCAA tourney, a hurdle they have been unable to get over the past two seasons. Lamont Long is expected to replace Charles Smith, the lone departing starter, at the wing spot. The talent is there for a run deep into the tournament. Bliss, however, knows his team has been a touch soft physically and has lacked discipline, two weaknesses he has attempted to address in the preseason.

PLAYBOY SPECIAL PREVIEW

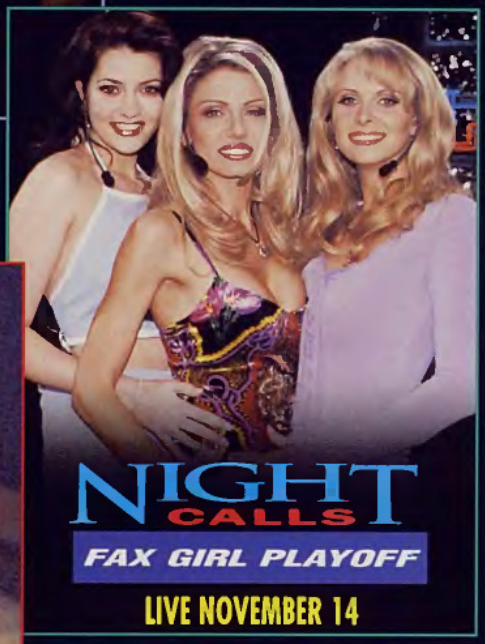


PLAYMATE HOSTS

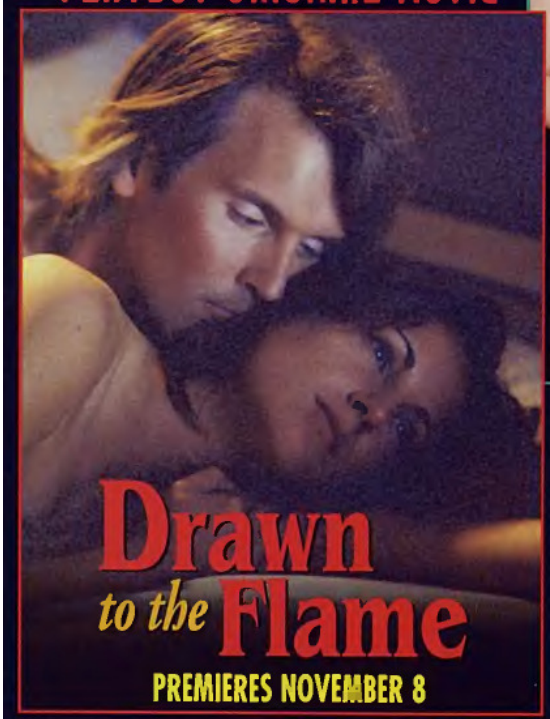
Inga Drozdova
Miss November

Karen McDougal
Miss December

ORIGINAL PROGRAM



PLAYBOY ORIGINAL MOVIE



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PLAYBOY'S 1998 COLLEGE

AMERICA EAST

*1.	BOSTON U.	6.	VERMONT
2.	HARTFORD	7.	TOWSON STATE
3.	DREXEL	8.	MAINE
4.	HOFSTRA	9.	NORTHEASTERN
5.	DELAWARE	10.	NEW HAMPSHIRE

STANDOUTS: Joey Beard, LeVar Folk (Boston U.); Ryan Howse, Anthony Bethune (Hartford); Joe Linderman, Mike DeRocckis (Drexel); Craig Claxton, Roberto Gittens (Hofstra); Keith Davis, Darryl Presley (Delaware); Erik Nelson, Craig Peper (Vermont); Ralph Biggs, Marlin Wise (Towson State); Fred Meeks, Linnell Marshall (Maine); Ty Mack, Rod Smith (Northeastern); Matt Acres (New Hampshire).

ATLANTIC COAST

*1.	DUKE	6.	VIRGINIA
*2.	NORTH CAROLINA	7.	GEORGIA TECH
*3.	CLEMSON	8.	WAKE FOREST
*4.	MARYLAND	9.	NORTH CAROLINA STATE
*5.	FLORIDA STATE		

STANDOUTS: Trajan Langdon, Steve Wojciechowski, Roshown McLeod (Duke); Antawn Jamison, Vince Carter, Shammond Williams (North Carolina); Greg Buckner, Terrell McIntyre (Clemson); Laron Profit, Terence Morris, Terrell Stokes (Maryland); Kerry Thompson, Randell Jackson, Corey Louis (Florida State); Courtney Alexander, Curtis Staples (Virginia); Matt Harpring, Dion Glover (Georgia Tech); Tony Rutland, Loren Woods (Wake Forest); C.C. Harrison, Ishua Benjamin (North Carolina State).

ATLANTIC TEN

EAST DIVISION

*1.	ST. JOSEPH'S	4.	MASSACHUSETTS
*2.	RHODE ISLAND	5.	ST. BONAVENTURE
*3.	TEMPLE	6.	FORDHAM

WEST DIVISION

*1.	XAVIER	4.	VIRGINIA TECH
*2.	GEORGE WASHINGTON	5.	DAYTON
3.	LASALLE	6.	DUQUESNE

STANDOUTS: Rashid Bey (St. Joseph's); Tyson Wheeler, Antonio Reynolds-Dean (Rhode Island); Rasheed Brokenborough, Pepe Sanchez (Temple); Lari Ketner, Tyrone Weeks (UMass); Rashaan Palmer, Tim Winn (St. Bonaventure); Maurice Curtis (Fordham); Lenny Brown, James Posey, Gary Lumpkin (Xavier); Alexander Koul, Yegor Mescheriakov (George Washington); Donnie Carr, Mike Gizzi (La Salle); Ryan Perryman (Dayton); Kevin Price, Mike James (Duquesne).

BIG EAST

BIG EAST SEVEN

*1.	SYRACUSE	5.	PROVIDENCE
*2.	SETON HALL	6.	RUTGERS
3.	GEORGETOWN	7.	PITTSBURGH
4.	MIAMI		

BIG EAST SIX

*1.	ST. JOHN'S	4.	VILLANOVA
*2.	CONNECTICUT	5.	BOSTON COLLEGE
3.	NOTRE DAME	6.	WEST VIRGINIA

STANDOUTS: Todd Burgan, Jason Hart (Syracuse); Shaheen Holloway, Levell Sanders (Seton Hall); Tim James, Kevin Norris (Miami); Jamel Thomas (Providence); Geoff Billet, Earl Johnson (Rutgers); Vonteego Cummings (Pittsburgh); Zendon Hamilton, Felipe Lopez (St. John's); Rashamel Jones, Richard Hamilton (Connecticut); Pat Garrity (Notre Dame); John Celestrand, Malik Allen (Villanova); Duane Woodward, Antonio Granger (Boston College); Damian Owens, Adrian Pledger (West Virginia).

BIG SKY

*1.	NORTHERN ARIZONA	6.	WEBER STATE
2.	CAL STATE–NORTHRIDGE	7.	EASTERN WASHINGTON
3.	MONTANA STATE	8.	IDAHO STATE
4.	PORTLAND STATE	9.	CAL STATE–SACRAMENTO
5.	MONTANA		

STANDOUTS: Andrew Mavis, Ross Land (Northern Arizona); Mike O'Quinn, Trenton Cross, Derrick Higgins (Cal State–Northridge); Nate Holmstadt, Damon Ollie, Danny Sprinkle (Montana State); Brian Towne, Mike Vanderhoff (Portland State); J.R. Camel, Ryan Dick (Montana); Damien Baskerville, Alex Fisher (Weber State); Kevin Lewis, Karim Scott (Eastern Washington); David Culbreath (Idaho State).

BIG SOUTH

*1.	NORTH CAROLINA–ASHEVILLE	5.	COASTAL CAROLINA
2.	LIBERTY	6.	MARYLAND–BALTIMORE COUNTY
3.	RADFORD	7.	CHARLESTON SOUTHERN
4.	WINTHROP		

STANDOUTS: Josh Pittman, Robert Stevenson (North Carolina–Asheville); Larry Jackson, Mark Reed (Liberty); Corey Reed, Kevin Robinson (Radford); Franklin Butts (Winthrop); Antoine Sims, Larry Roberts (Coastal Carolina); Isaac Green, Jason Womble (Maryland–BC).

BIG TEN

*1.	PURDUE	7.	WISCONSIN
*2.	MINNESOTA	8.	MICHIGAN STATE
*3.	MICHIGAN	9.	PENN STATE
*4.	IOWA	10.	OHIO STATE
*5.	ILLINOIS	11.	NORTHWESTERN
*6.	INDIANA		

STANDOUTS: Chad Austin, Brad Miller (Purdue); Sam Jacobson, Eric Harris (Minnesota); Louis Bullock, Robert Traylor, Maceo Baston (Michigan); Jess Settles, Ryan Bowen (Iowa); Jerry Hester (Illinois); Andrae Patterson, A.J. Guyton (Indiana); Sam Okey, Ty Calderwood (Wisconsin); Antonio Smith, Mateen Cleaves (Michigan State); Pete Lisicky, Dan Earl (Penn State); Damon Stringer, Shaun Stonerook (Ohio State); Evan Eschmeyer (Northwestern).

BIG TWELVE

*1.	KANSAS	7.	BAYLOR
*2.	TEXAS	8.	TEXAS TECH
*3	NEBRASKA	9.	OKLAHOMA STATE
4.	OKLAHOMA	10.	COLORADO
5.	MISSOURI	11.	KANSAS STATE
6.	IOWA STATE	12.	TEXAS A&M

STANDOUTS: Raef LaFrentz, Paul Pierce, Billy Thomas (Kansas); Kris Clack, Brandy Perryman (Texas); Tyronn Lue, Venson Hamilton (Nebraska); Corey Brewer, Eduardo Najera (Oklahoma); Kelly Thames, Albert White (Missouri); Stevie Johnson, Marcus Fizer (Iowa State); Brian Skinner, Leon Morris (Baylor); Cory Carr, Stan Bonewitz (Texas Tech); Ronnie DeGray (Colorado); Paco May, Shawn Rhodes (Kansas State); Calvin Davis (Texas A&M).

BIG WEST

EASTERN DIVISION

*1.	NEW MEXICO STATE	4.	UTAH STATE
2.	NEVADA	5.	NORTH TEXAS
3.	BOISE STATE	6.	IDAHO

WESTERN DIVISION

*1.	PACIFIC	4.	LONG BEACH STATE
2.	UC–SANTA BARBARA	5.	UC–IRVINE
3.	CAL POLY–SAN LUIS OBISPO	6.	CAL STATE–FULLERTON

STANDOUTS: Louis Richardson, Antoine Hubbard (New Mexico State); Jimmy Carroll, Paul Culbertson (Nevada); Gerry Washington, Roberto Bergersen (Boise State); T.J. Atkins, David Miller (North Texas); Kris Baumann (Idaho); Michael Olowokandi, Adam Jacobsen, Corey Anders (Pacific); Raymond Tutt, Kealon Wallace (UC–Santa Barbara); Lamarr Parker, Juma Jackson (UC–Irvine).

COLONIAL

*1.	OLD DOMINION	6.	GEORGE MASON
2.	JAMES MADISON	7.	NORTH CAROLINA–WILMINGTON
3.	EAST CAROLINA	8.	WILLIAM & MARY
4.	VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH	9.	AMERICAN
5.	RICHMOND		

STANDOUTS: Mike Byers, Cal Bowdler (Old Dominion); Eugene Atkinson, Chatney Howard (James Madison); Raphael Edwards, Othello Meadows (East Carolina); Marvis Thornton, Torrance Archie (Virginia Commonwealth); Eric Poole, Jarod Stevenson (Richmond); Avery Carey (George Mason); Stan Simmons, Mark Byington (North Carolina–Wilmington); Randy Bracy (William & Mary).

CONFERENCE USA

AMERICAN

*1.	UNC–CHARLOTTE	*4.	CINCINNATI
*2.	MARQUETTE	5.	ST. LOUIS
*3.	LOUISVILLE	6.	DEPAUL

NATIONAL

*1.	ALABAMA–BIRMINGHAM	4.	SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI
2.	MEMPHIS	5.	HOUSTON
3.	TULANE	6.	SOUTH FLORIDA

STANDOUTS: DeMarco Johnson, Sean Colson (North Carolina–Charlotte); Aaron Hutchins, Jarrod Lovette (Marquette); Nate Johnson, Alex Sanders (Louisville); Ruben Patterson, Michael Horton (Cincinnati); Larry Hughes, Jeramy Biles (St. Louis); Jermaine Watts (DePaul); Cedric Dixon, Damon Cobb (Alabama–Birmingham); Omar Sneed, Detric Golden (Memphis); Lawrence Nelson (Tulane); Kelly McCarty, Jimmie Floyd (Southern Mississippi); Galen Robinson (Houston); Brian Lamb (South Florida).

IVY LEAGUE

*1.	PRINCETON	5.	DARTMOUTH
2.	PENNSYLVANIA	6.	CORNELL
3.	HARVARD	7.	COLUMBIA
4.	YALE	8.	BROWN

STANDOUTS: Brian Earl, Gabe Lewullis, Steve Goodrich (Princeton); Paul Romanczuk, Michael Jordan (Pennsylvania); Tim Hill (Harvard); Ian McGinnis, Jihan Bowes-Little (Dartmouth); Michael Roberts (Cornell); Gary Raimondo (Columbia); Aaron Butler (Brown).

METRO ATLANTIC

*1.	IONA	6.	ST. PETER'S
2.	NIAGARA	7.	SIENA
3.	LOYOLA COLLEGE	8.	FAIRFIELD
4.	CANISIUS	9.	MARIST
5.	MANHATTAN	10.	RIDER

STANDOUTS: John McDonald, Kashif Hameed, Tariq Kirksay (Iona); Kevin Jobity, Mike Piwerka (Niagara); Mike Powell, Jason Rowe (Loyola); Kevin Thompson, James Cammaert (Canisius); Travis Lyons, Kyle Crandall (Manhattan); Marcus Faison (Siena).

MID-AMERICAN

EAST DIVISION

1.	BOWLING GREEN STATE	4.	AKRON
2.	MARSHALL	5.	OHIO
3.	MIAMI	6.	KENT

WEST DIVISION

*1.	EASTERN MICHIGAN	4.	TOLEDO
2.	BALL STATE	5.	NORTHERN ILLINOIS
3.	WESTERN MICHIGAN	6.	CENTRAL MICHIGAN

STANDOUTS: DeMar Moore, Anthony Stacey (Bowling Green State); Carlton King (Marshall); Wally Szczerbiak, Damon Frierson (Miami); Jimmal Ball, George Phillips (Akron); Ed Norvell (Kent); Earl Boykins, Derrick Dial (Eastern Michigan); Bonzi Wells (Ball State); Casey Shaw, Clayton Burch (Toledo); T.J. Lux (Northern Illinois); Aaron Brown (Central Michigan).

MID-CONTINENT

*1.	VALPARAISO	6.	SOUTHERN UTAH
2.	BUFFALO	7.	WESTERN ILLINOIS
3.	ORAL ROBERTS	8.	NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS
4.	CHICAGO STATE		
5.	MISSOURI–KANSAS CITY	9.	YOUNGSTOWN STATE

STANDOUTS: Bryce Drew, Antanas Vilcinskas (Valparaiso); Rasaun Young, Mike Martinho (Buffalo); Jermaine Hicks,

BASKETBALL PREDICTIONS

Marques Buford (Chicago State); Lonnie Alexander (Missouri–Kansas City).

MID-EASTERN

*1. COPPIN STATE
2. SOUTH CAROLINA STATE
3. FLORIDA A&M
4. MORGAN STATE
5. NORTH CAROLINA A&T STATE
6. HAMPTON
7. BETHUNE–COOKMAN
8. DELAWARE STATE
9. MARYLAND–EASTERN SHORE
10. HOWARD
11. NORFOLK STATE

STANDOUTS: Antoine Brockington, Kareem Lewis (Coppin State); Roderick Blakney, Raheem Waller (South Carolina State); Rasheed Sparks, O'Tes Alston (Morgan State); Kenny Curtis, Tarik Beasley (North Carolina A&T State); Brian Parker (Delaware State).

MIDWESTERN

*1. BUTLER
2. ILLINOIS–CHICAGO
3. DETROIT MERCY
4. WISCONSIN–GREEN BAY
5. WRIGHT STATE
6. CLEVELAND STATE
7. LOYOLA OF CHICAGO
8. WISCONSIN–MILWAUKEE

STANDOUTS: Jon Neuhouser, Rolf van Rijn (Butler); Mark Miller, Bryant Lowe (Illinois–Chicago); Derrick Hayes, Brian Alexander (Detroit Mercy); Matt Hill (Wisconsin–Green Bay); Keion Brooks (Wright State); James Madison (Cleveland State).

MISSOURI VALLEY

*1. ILLINOIS STATE
2. SOUTHWEST MISSOURI STATE
3. BRADLEY
4. EVANSVILLE
5. WICHITA STATE
6. SOUTHERN ILLINOIS
7. NORTHERN IOWA
8. CREIGHTON
9. INDIANA STATE
10. DRAKE

STANDOUTS: Rico Hill, Skipp Schaefbauer (Illinois State); Danny Moore, Ben Kandlbinder (Southwest Missouri State); Adebayo Akinkunle (Bradley); Marcus Wilson, Chris Hollender (Evansville); Rashad Tucker (Southern Illinois); Tony Brus, Darian DeVries (Northern Iowa); Rodney Buford (Creighton); Nate Green, Jayson Wells (Indiana State); Myron Richardson, Rashaad Thomas (Drake).

NORTHEAST

*1. LONG ISLAND
2. FAIRLEIGH DICKINSON
3. WAGNER
4. ST. FRANCIS–PA
5. MOUNT ST. MARY'S
6. MONMOUTH
7. ROBERT MORRIS
8. CENTRAL CONNECTICUT STATE
9. ST. FRANCIS–NY

STANDOUTS: Charles Jones, Richie Parker, Mike Campbell (Long Island); Rahshon Turner, Jermaine Slider (Fairleigh Dickinson); Eric Taylor, Sotiris Aggelou (St. Francis–Pa.); Joe Fermino (Monmouth); Javier Smith (Robert Morris); Victor Payne (Central Connecticut State).

OHIO VALLEY

*1. TENNESSEE STATE
2. MURRAY STATE
3. MIDDLE TENNESSEE
4. AUSTIN PEAY STATE
5. TENNESSEE TECH
6. EASTERN KENTUCKY
7. EASTERN ILLINOIS
8. TENNESSEE–MARTIN
9. SE MISSOURI STATE
10. MOREHEAD STATE

STANDOUTS: Jason Johnson, Kevin Samuel (Tennessee State); De'Teri Mayes, Chad Townsend (Murray State); Aylton Tesch, Richard Duncan (Middle Tennessee); Reggie Crenshaw (Austin Peay State); Marc Glanton, Reggie Nelson (Tennessee Tech); Daniel Sutton, Matt Simons (Eastern Kentucky); Chad Peckinpaugh, Rick Kaye (Eastern Illinois); Joe Crumby (Tennessee–Martin).

PACIFIC TEN

*1. UCLA
*2. ARIZONA
*3. STANFORD
*4. WASHINGTON
5. ARIZONA STATE
6. USC
7. WASHINGTON STATE
8. CALIFORNIA
9. OREGON
10. OREGON STATE

STANDOUTS: J.R. Henderson, Jelani McCoy, Toby Bailey (UCLA); Miles Simon, Mike Bibby, A.J. Bramlett, Michael Dickerson (Arizona); Tim Young, Kris Weems (Stanford); Todd MacCulloch, Patrick Femerling (Washington); Jeremy Veal, Eddie House (Arizona State); Elias Ayuso (USC); Carlos Daniel, Blake Pengelly (Washington State); Sean Marks, Geno Carlisle (California); Jamar Curry (Oregon); Deaundre Tanner (Oregon State).

PATRIOT LEAGUE

*1. BUCKNELL
2. NAVY
3. LAFAYETTE
4. HOLY CROSS
5. COLGATE
6. LEHIGH
7. ARMY

STANDOUTS: J.R. Holden, Dan Bowen (Bucknell); Michael Heary, Hassan Booker (Navy); Stefan Ciosici, Brian Ehlers (Lafayette); Seth Schaeffer (Colgate); Brett Eppehimer (Lehigh).

SOUTHEASTERN

EASTERN DIVISION

*1. KENTUCKY
*2. GEORGIA
*3. SOUTH CAROLINA
*4. VANDERBILT
5. FLORIDA
6. TENNESSEE

WESTERN DIVISION

*1. MISSISSIPPI
*2. ARKANSAS
3. ALABAMA
4. MISSISSIPPI STATE
5. AUBURN
6. LOUISIANA STATE

STANDOUTS: Jeff Sheppard, Scott Padgett, Wayne Turner (Kentucky); Michael Chadwick, Ray Harrison (Georgia); BJ McKie, Melvin Watson (South Carolina); Drew Maddux, Billy Di Spaltro (Vanderbilt); Eddie Shannon, Greg Stolt (Florida); Brandon Wharton, Charles Hathaway (Tennessee); Ansu Sesay, Jason Smith (Mississippi); Brian Williams (Alabama); Horatio Webster, Tyrone Washington (Mississippi State); Randy Hughes, Franklin Williams (Auburn); Maurice Carter, Rogers Washington (Louisiana State).

SOUTHERN

NORTH DIVISION

*1. DAVIDSON
2. APPALACHIAN STATE
3. UNC–GREENSBORO
4. WESTERN CAROLINA
5. VMI
6. EAST TENNESSEE STATE

SOUTH DIVISION

1. FURMAN
2. CHATTANOOGA
3. GEORGIA SOUTHERN
4. THE CITADEL
5. WOFFORD

STANDOUTS: Mark Donnelly, Landry Kosmalski (Davidson); Tige Darner, Kareem Livingston (Appalachian State); Ryan Wilson (East Tennessee State); Chuck Vincent, Andre Kerr (Furman); David Phillips (Chattanooga); Elvardo Rolle (Georgia Southern); Virgil Stevens, Matt Newman (The Citadel).

SOUTHLAND

*1. SOUTHWEST TEXAS
2. NORTHEAST LOUISIANA
3. TEXAS–ARLINGTON
4. MCNEESE STATE
5. NICHOLLS STATE
6. SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA
7. TEXAS–SAN ANTONIO
8. SAM HOUSTON STATE
9. NORTHWESTERN STATE–LOUISIANA
10. STEPHEN F. AUSTIN

STANDOUTS: Donte Mathis, Jeff Foster (Southwest Texas); Ray McGill, Maurice Bell (Northeast Louisiana); Robert Taylor, Bill Washington (Texas–Arlington); Demond Mallet (McNeese State); Troy Green, Andre Lewis (Southeastern Louisiana); Roderic Hall, Steve Meyer (Texas–San Antonio); David Amaya (Sam Houston State).

SOUTHWESTERN

*1. JACKSON STATE
2. MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE
3. TEXAS SOUTHERN
4. GRAMBLING
5. ALABAMA STATE
6. ALCORN STATE
7. PRAIRIE VIEW A&M
8. SOUTHERN–BATON ROUGE
9. ARKANSAS–PINE BLUFF

STANDOUTS: Trent Pulliam, Robert Fairley (Jackson State); Kenyon Ross, Anthony Davis (Mississippi Valley State); Randy Bolden (Texas Southern); Mark Meredith, Leroy Hollingshed (Grambling); Paul Jones (Alcorn State); Tamarron Sharpe (Prairie View A&M); Ronnell Williams (Southern–Baton Rouge).

SUN BELT

*1. SOUTH ALABAMA
2. LOUISIANA TECH
3. SOUTHWESTERN LOUISIANA
4. NEW ORLEANS
5. ARKANSAS–LITTLE ROCK
6. JACKSONVILLE
7. ARKANSAS STATE
8. LAMAR
9. WESTERN KENTUCKY
10. TEXAS–PAN AMERICAN

STANDOUTS: Jerome Coaxum, Rusty Yoder (South Alabama); Lonnie Cooper, Derek Smith, Jacque Collins (Louisiana Tech); Reginald Poole, Chris Manuel, Tyrone Foster (Southwestern Louisiana); DeWaune Wesley (New Orleans); Ryan Moss (Arkansas–Little Rock); Micah Ross, John Knox, Aaron Fox (Jacksonville); Jabari Myles, Freddy Hicks (Arkansas State); Ivan Ostarcevic, Rene Salomao (Texas–Pan American).

TRANS AMERICA

EAST DIVISION

*1. FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL
2. COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON
3. CAMPBELL
4. STETSON
5. FLORIDA ATLANTIC
6. CENTRAL FLORIDA

WEST DIVISION

1. GEORGIA STATE
2. CENTENARY
3. SAMFORD
4. MERCER
5. TROY STATE
6. JACKSONVILLE STATE

STANDOUTS: Raja Bell, Darius Cook, Gene Derkack (Florida International); Sedric Webber (College of Charleston); Corey Best (Campbell); Garrett Davis (Stetson); Will Daniel (Samford); Evans Davis, Bruce Simms (Mercer).

WEST COAST

*1. ST. MARY'S
2. SAN FRANCISCO
3. GONZAGA
4. PEPPERDINE
5. SANTA CLARA
6. SAN DIEGO
7. LOYOLA MARYMOUNT
8. PORTLAND

STANDOUTS: Brad Millard, David Sivulich, Eric Schraeder (St. Mary's); Hakeem Ward, M.J. Nodilo, Damian Cantrell (San Francisco); Paul Rogers, Matt Santangelo (Gonzaga); Gerald Brown, Bryan Hill, Jelani Gardner (Pepperdine); Brian Jones (Santa Clara); Brian Miles (San Diego); Kenny Hotopp (Loyola Marymount); Chivo Anderson (Portland).

WESTERN ATHLETIC

MOUNTAIN DIVISION

*1. UTAH
*2. NEW MEXICO
3. COLORADO STATE
4. WYOMING
5. UNLV
6. TEXAS–EL PASO
7. AIR FORCE
8. BRIGHAM YOUNG

PACIFIC DIVISION

*1. FRESNO STATE
*2. HAWAII
3. TULSA
4. TCU
5. SOUTHERN METHODIST
6. RICE
7. SAN DIEGO STATE
8. SAN JOSE STATE

STANDOUTS: Michael Doleac, Andre Miller (Utah); Kenny Thomas, Clayton Shields (New Mexico); Matt Barnett, Bryan Christiansen (Colorado State); Jeron Roberts, Gregg Sawyer (Wyoming); Keon Clark, Tyrone Nesby (UNLV); B.J. Wade (Texas–El Paso); Jarmica Reese, Mike Freeman (Air Force); Justin Weidauer (Brigham Young); Chris Herren, Tremaine Fowlkes, Winfred Walton (Fresno State); Anthony Carter, Alika Smith (Hawaii); Michael Ruffin, Rod Thompson (Tulsa); Mike Jones (TCU); Jay Poerner (Southern Methodist); Jason Richey (San Diego State); Marmet Williams (San Jose State).

*Our predictions to make the NCAA tournament.

(44) SETON HALL

It's the dawn of the Tommy Amaker era at Seton Hall. The former Duke player and nine-year assistant to Mike Krzyzewski has the opportunity to mold a program in his image. He has lots of talent to work with. Guard Shaheen Holloway (17.3 ppg) returns after an award-winning freshman season. His backcourt partner, Levell Sanders, averaged slightly fewer points (15.8 ppg) but chipped in 5.1 rebounds per game. The Pirates are a little small in the paint unless senior Jacky Kaba steps up his game. Forward Donnell Williams could help on the boards if he can avoid the injuries that have plagued him most of his collegiate career.

(45) SOUTHWEST MISSOURI STATE

It's probably a stretch to think that two teams in the Missouri Valley Conference could get NCAA bids. However, the aforementioned Illinois State and coach Steve Alford's Southwest Missouri State probably deserve them. Alford, who made a name for himself playing for Indiana's Bob Knight for all four years of his college eligibility, gets back four starters from last year's 24-win squad. The best of the bunch is 6'11" forward and center Danny Moore, who averaged 19.5 points per game. Billy Coby, who sat out after transferring from Washington State, and juco transfers Butch Tshomba and Ken Stringer could help as well.

(46) MICHIGAN STATE

The Spartans may not have enough firepower to win the Big Ten this season, but third-year coach Tom Izzo has a promising assortment of returning starters and talented recruits. Sophomore guard Mateen Cleaves, who was slowed by a back injury last year, should be one of the conference's top assist men, while 6'8" forward Antonio Smith attempts to repeat as the Big Ten's leading rebounder (10.6 rpg). Freshmen Charlie Bell and Andre Hutson are highly regarded. Expect Michigan State to make a serious run at an NCAA tournament berth.

(47) VANDERBILT

With six of his top seven scorers returning, Vanderbilt coach Jan van Breda Kolff expects his Commodores to improve on the 19–12 record that got them a ticket to the Big Dance last season. Guard Drew Maddux, power forward Billy Di Spaltro and 6'9" center Austin Bates are the central players in the Vandy scheme of things. Homegrown freshman Sam Howard will help in the backcourt, while Anthony Williams, Alabama high school player of the year and the all-time leading rebounder in the state, should help under the boards, a weak spot for the Commodores last season.

(48) SOUTH ALABAMA

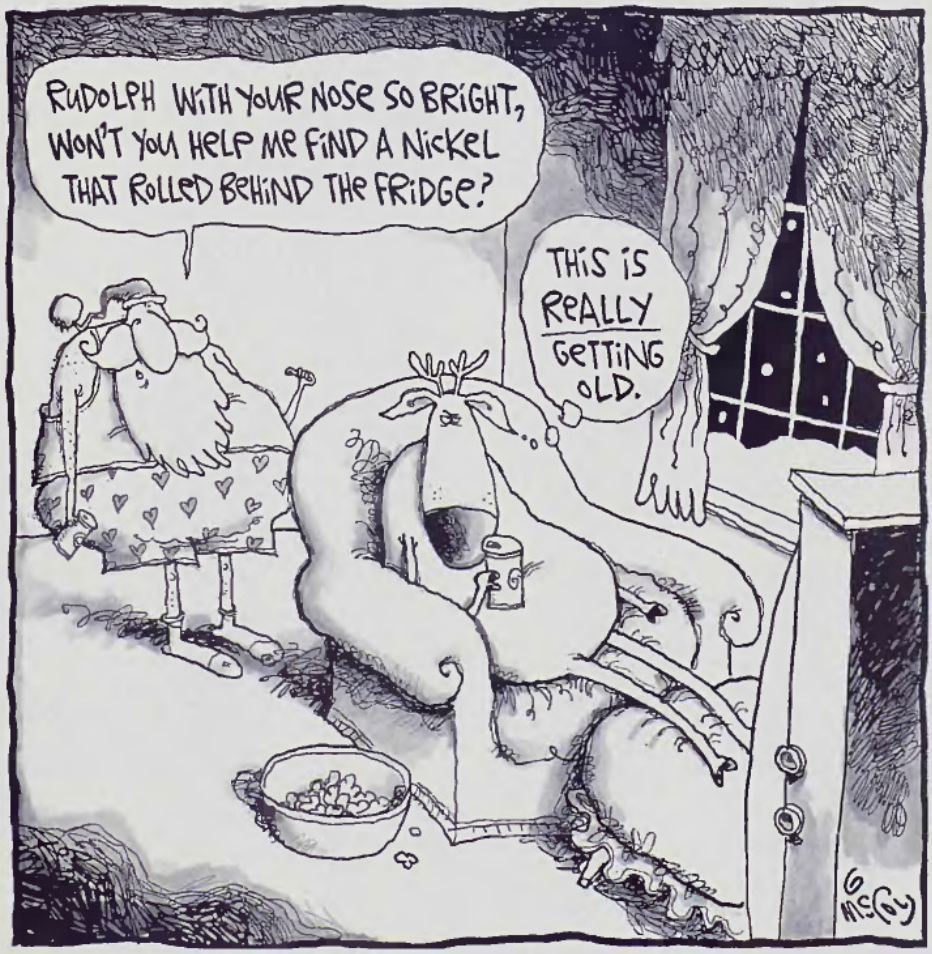
Evidently, Bill Musselman has learned a few things about how to win basketball games in a 33-year coaching career that has taken him from high school to college to the ABA, CBA and NBA. In just two years since he took the reins at South Alabama, he's transformed an obscure program into a winning team that was on the verge of becoming a media darling on the eve of the NCAA tournament. Had the Jaguars held on to a ten-point lead with seven minutes to play in their NCAA tourney first-round game against eventual national champ Arizona, Musselman and South Alabama would undoubtedly have found themselves thrust into the national spotlight. With four starters returning plus the addition of two solid junior college players (Travon Broadway and Darrian Evans), they'll have another opportunity to upset the big boys when the next season rolls around.

(49) EASTERN MICHIGAN

Call it "What have you done for me lately?" Two years ago, Eastern Michigan won the MAC regular season and tourney titles, then upset mighty Duke (75–60) in the first round of the NCAA tournament. Last season, the Eagles won 22 games but tripped over Miami in the conference tourney championship. Result: No NCAA bid, no NIT bid. With four starters returning, EMU is out for revenge. The best of the Eagles is also the smallest: 5'5" Earl Boykins, who averaged 19.1 points per game last year. Coach Milton Barnes has added 6'10" juco transfer Ajani Williams to put muscle in the paint, as well as freshman guard Sharif Fordham, a defensive specialist.

(50) LONG ISLAND

Who can forget the well-chronicled story of Richie Parker, the heralded high school player whose life and basketball career short-circuited when he was convicted on a sexual abuse charge? He received five years probation and then went to Long Island University. So far, Parker has remained trouble free in school and has excelled on the court with a 16.1-points-per-game average. However, he's not the Blackbirds' only weapon. Guard Charles Jones returns as the nation's leading scorer with a 30.1-points-per-game average. Senior forward Mike Campbell added an average 18.7 as well, giving LIU one of the most explosive scoring trios in the nation. With better depth and a little more size under the boards, Long Island and Richie Parker might wind up in the media spotlight once again, this time with a more positive spin.



(continued from page 140)

that looked homemade, a pearl choker and black penny loafers. She waited behind a grizzly, middle-aged man in a blue-striped cotton robe and pajamas who was smoking a cigarette and playing a game of solitaire. When Stephens had beaten the spine of his book into submission, he made a flicking motion with his hand, as if he were shooing a fly. "Eckstrom's way back thataway."

The ward was hot, and the air heavy and stale. Freddy unbuttoned his coat and loosened his tie, looking around. He had never been to Granite Falls before, but he had been in more than a few psychiatric facilities. For a state hospital, Granite Falls was not a bad place. The dayroom was L-shaped with a high ceiling, a blond-stained oak floor and four large alcoves of leaded glass windows that were obscured by thick mesh screens. It was a capacious room, and though there was much evidence of hard wear, it retained a kind of bygone elegance. Apart from a set of old mahogany dining tables, the furniture in Ward Six was a hodgepodge of Salvation Army couches and lounge chairs. In the center of the room, next to the television, was a nine-foot Christmas tree that was festooned with tiny blinking lights, tinsel and at least a dozen paper angels. Pine wreaths, brightened with glossy red holly berries and more homemade angels, hung from the mesh window security screens.

As the pair continued to linger, Stephens beat his book cover against the edge of his desk and said, "Go on, get out of here. I'm sick of looking at you."

Freddy smiled, put on his I'm-in-hell-it-doesn't-matter voice and said, "Thank you for your patience and consideration, Mr. Stephens."

As Freddy pulled Mrs. Gordon away from the charge desk, a man wearing a crucifix and a black cloak sidled up to the visitors. He had thick curly red hair, bushy red eyebrows and a face full of freckles. His pale green eyes were ringed with gold flecks that made Freddy wonder if he suffered from Wilson's disease, a syndrome that is marked by the inability to metabolize copper. The man said, "Good afternoon. Mr. Eckstrom is in the back attending to matters of the highest importance. I'm Charlie White. Allow me to present my dear friend, Marla Hollingsbury."

"You look like Jacqueline Onassis," Marla said. She had a deep voice and a theatrical manner. "Are you her?" She reached out and took Mrs. Gordon's hand.

"Well, people tell me that," Mrs. Gordon said. "I think it's because of the way I do my hair. I mean, I don't try to cultivate the look." She tried to withdraw her hand but Marla continued to pump

WHERE & HOW TO BUY

WIRED

Pages 36–37: "Playboy's PC Picks": **Computers:** By *Packard Bell*, 800-733-5858. By *Falcon Northwest*, 541-269-0775. By *Dell*, 800-289-3355. By *Gateway 2000*, 800-846-2000. "The PSX Challenge": **PC peripheral** by *Sony Electronics*, 800-222-7669. "Just Say No to Noise": **Headphones:** By *Koss*, 800-872-5677. By *Noise Cancellation Technology*, 800-278-3526. By *Bose*, 800-444-2673. By *Sony Electronics*, 800-222-7669. "Wild Things": **Mouse** by *Kensington*, 800-535-4242. **Internet terminal** by *Coollogic*, 972-480-8383. **Scanner** by *Storm Technology*, 888-438-3279. **PC kit** by *Hi-Val*, 714-953-3000. **Video camera** by *Panasonic*, 800-742-8086. "Multimedia Reviews and News": **Software:** By *Red Orb Entertainment*, from Broderbund, 800-521-6263. By *Sony Electronics*, 800-345-7669. By *GT Interactive Software*, 800-610-4847. By *Interplay Productions*, 800-468-3775. By *Eidos Interactive* and *Ion Storm*, at software stores. By *Lucas Arts*, 800-985-8227. By *Nintendo*, 800-255-3700. "Sim Luck": **Software:** By *Acclaim Entertainment*, 516-759-7800. By *Electronic Arts*, 800-245-4525. By *Interactive Magic*, 800-789-1534. "Best of the Bizarre": **Software:** By *Shiny Entertainment*, from Interplay Productions, 714-553-6655. By *Dreamworks*, 310-234-7070. By *Simon & Schuster Interactive*, 800-910-0099. By *Sony Electronics*, 800-345-7669. By *Crystal Dynamics*, 415-473-3326. "Sports and the Great Outdoors": **Software:** By *Sony Electronics*, 800-345-7669. By *Electronic Arts*, 800-245-4525. By *Konami*, 847-215-5100. By *Mindscape*, 800-231-3088.

MANTRACK

Pages 43–44, 46: "Power Smokes": *Oliveros* from Cigars Direct, 305-445-2220 (ask for Rebecca Nieto). *Hoja Cubana*, at exclusive tobacconists. *Indian Tabac*, 888-766-5387. *Padrón*, 800-453-5635. *Caoba*, 800-606-1001. *Lone Wolf*, 800-586-9653. "Best Seat": **Chair**, 800-955-5996 (ask for premium sales). "Luxury Leather": **Stanley Traveler**, 800-544-0880. **Laptop Brief**, 800-548-5484. "Buck Tool": 800-215-2825. "Total Control": **Remote**, 630-307-3100.

CHRISTMAS GIFTS

Pages 95–99: **Home theater** by *Projectavision*, 888-559-7588. **Bike** by *Airo International*, 760-632-0489. **Watches** by *Longines*, 800-897-9477. **Radio** by *Grundig America*, 800-872-2228. **Prairie ATV** by *Kawasaki*, 800-661-7433. **Guitar** by *Martin Guitars*, 800-633-2060. **Cups** from *Holland & Holland*, 212-752-7755. **Scotch** from *White Rock Distilleries*, 800-628-5441. **Model car** by *Fine Art Models*, 248-288-5155. **Handycam** by *Sony Electronics*, 800-222-7669.

CHRISTMAS GIZMOS

Pages 120–121: **Pager** by *Motorola*, 800-548-9954. **Phone** by *Qualcomm*, 800-349-4188. **Communicator** by *Magellan Systems*, 800-669-4477. **Computer** by *Apple*, 800-800-2775. **Recorder** by *Olympus America*, 888-553-4448. **Controller** by *Reality Quest*, 888-964-5683. **Modem** by *Hayes Micro Computer Products*, 770-840-9200. **Data bank** by *Casio*, 800-962-2746. **Videophone** by *8 x 8, Inc.*, 888-843-9898. **Headset** by *ACS Wireless*, 800-995-5500. **Computer peripheral** by *Panasonic*, 800-742-8086. **Radar detector** by *Escort*, 800-433-3487.

YULE TOGS

Pages 154–157: **Suit, shirt and tie** by *DKNY*, at select Saks Fifth Avenue stores. **Shoes** by *Kenneth Cole*, 800-536-2653. **Jacket and trousers** by *PS Paul Smith*, 212-338-0120. **Shirt** by *John Bartlett*, at select Bloomingdale's. **Tie** by *Prada*, 212-327-0488. **Jacket, trousers and shirt** by *Nicole Farhi*, at Charivari, 212-333-4040. **Suit, shirt and tie** by *Giorgio Armani*, at Giorgio Armani Boutiques. **Jacket and pants** by *Paul Smith*, 212-338-0120. **Shirt** from *Aesthetics by Maurice Malone*, at Fred Segal, 213-651-3342. **Suit, shirt, tie and shoes** by *Prada*, 212-327-0488.

ON THE SCENE

Page 223: **Rack unit** by *Bell'Oggetti*, 732-972-1333. **Receiver** by *Yamaha*, 800-492-6242. **Laser disc, DVD and CD player** by *Pioneer Electronics*, 800-746-6337. **DSS receiver** by *Uniden America Corp.*, 817-858-3300. **VCR** by *RCA*, from Thomson Electronics, 800-336-1900. **Headphones** by *Sony Electronics*, 800-222-7669.

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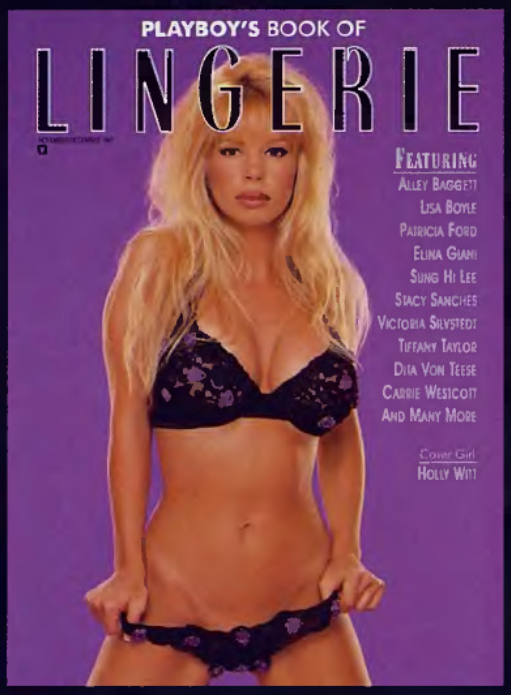

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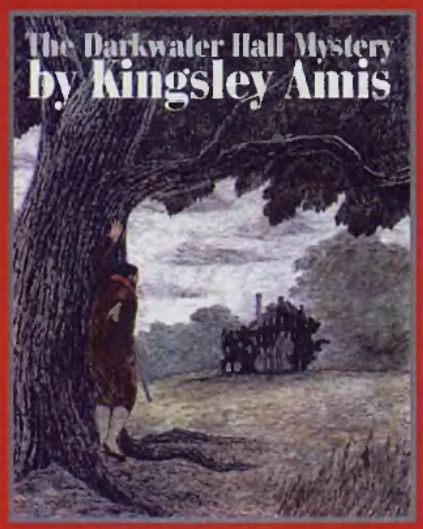

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it vigorously.

Freddy was getting a kick out of this. He smiled at the man in black. "If your name is Charles White, how come you wear all that black? You wearin' a whole lotta black."

"I'm a man of Dostoyevskian complexity," Mr. White said.

"I thought maybe you were like Zorro or something," Freddy said.

Marla continued to pump Mrs. Gordon's hand with such vigor that Iona inadvertently stepped out of her left shoe. "Charlie has seizures," Marla said.

"That's true," White said. "But otherwise I'm in perfect health."

"Take it easy, Marla, you're hurting me," Mrs. Gordon said. "Let go of my hand!"

Marla began to laugh hysterically. "I'm really nervous."

Charles White grabbed Marla's wrist, which seemed as thick as a railroad tie, and loosened her grip. "Marla's excited. She doesn't meet many celebrities in this place."

"But I'm not a celebrity. My name is Iona Gordon."

"We know that you aren't the former first lady," Charlie told her. "She's been dead for some time now! Three years, seven months, four days and 21 hours, 16 minutes."

Marla continued to giggle. "Charlie and I are Jackie's Granite Falls fan club. I'm sorry, Iona. You're such a lovely woman. You do look like her. And your friend looks like John Cassavetes."

Mrs. Gordon was appalled at Marla's tongue. It was black and seemed to be a yard long. Freddy picked up his stepmother's shoe and began to usher her away. She stopped to slip it on. The back of the ward was dark and they moved in that direction with trepidation.

"What's with her tongue?" Mrs. Gordon whispered.

"Pepto-Bismol. The bismuth does that," Freddy said. "Stomach upsets. Either that or she's a chow dog."

Cousin Eustace was on his knees at the back of the dayroom, carefully laying a bead of ketchup along the oak baseboard. "Hey-ya," Freddy said. "What's going on, bro?"

Eustace Eckstrom was in his middle 50s, but he looked much older. He had gone entirely bald since Freddy had last seen him. The left side of his face was sagging. His mouth was set askew. His right eyelid twitched. Eustace wore a pair of loose khaki pants, shower shoes and a dingy cotton singlet. He had the sort of beard that made him look badly in need of a shave, even after a shave. This effect was accentuated by his skin's deathly pallor. Eustace's shoulders were slumped and his countenance was downcast. He took in the presence of his cousins and said, "Those motherfuckers are at it again—pumping gas in here."

"Oh yeah?" Freddy said.

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JENNIFER ALLAN

KIMBER WEST

NADINE CHANZ

KONA CARMACK

LYNN THOMAS

KELLY MONACO

VICTORIA FULLER

ANGEL BORIS

VICTORIA SILVSTEDT

"Yeah!" Eustace said. "I can hear them talking when I take my urine. I can't see them. Just hear tinkle voices."

"In your piss?" Freddy said.

"Yeah, my urine."

"That can happen," Freddy said with a mischievous smile. "I wouldn't worry about it. Hey, look who came here to see you."

Cousin Eustace worked the ketchup container like a caulking gun, edging the nozzle along the baseboard. "It's Aunt Iona," Cousin Eustace said. "I already saw her. She sends me the same thing every year and I never eat it. Trying to poison me and collect on insurance, that's all."

"You could do with some vitamin C, Eu," Freddy said.

"Soda crackers. That's all I eat. Saltines."

Mrs. Gordon said, "You're working awfully hard, Eustace. Would you like to have a little visit with us? Go out for a ride, maybe? I'll get you a present you really want. What do you say?"

Eustace got up and laid a bead of ketchup along the base of a window. "Smell the gas?"

Freddy shook his head and said, "Brother, it smells like you got a load in your pants."

"There's a war in heaven," Cousin Eustace said. "That's what the piss voices say. I'm on the punishment brigade. You better just leave me alone from now on."

Freddy wriggled a finger in his ear and said, "Aunt Iona brought some really boring family pictures she thought you might want to see."

"I'm busy here," Eustace said.

"OK," Freddy said. "I'd like to ask you a question. What's this I hear about you having sex on weekends back in the days of your youth?"

Eustace's features brightened. "Did you talk to Vera?"

"Is that her name? What did she look like?" Freddy said.

"Vera Simpson?" Mrs. Gordon said. "Ho, boy! I remember her."

"She sent me a Christmas card, Aunt Iona. From Oklahoma. Drive me there! OK?"

"To Oklahoma?" Mrs. Gordon said. "I don't know. That's pretty far."

Cousin Eustace thought this over for a moment and a dark look came over his face. He said, "You offered me a present and then you chink out! Go fuck!"

Mrs. Gordon followed Freddy back to Stephens' desk. It was obvious that everyone in the ward had listened to their conversation. Iona Gordon felt so conspicuous she hardly knew how to walk.

Eustace called after them. "I'm not a woman, Fred. I have an Adam's apple."

A patient in a knit hat looked up from the TV and cried out, "That's right! And you are one snoring-ass motherfucker. Know what else, asshole? Romeo and Juliet? If they don't commit suicide, they get sick of each other. Put them in a hotel room for six weeks! Six dick-fucking weeks and they'll be singing a whole different tune."

Stephens looked up from his book and yelled, "Can it, Edwall!"

At the charge desk Stephens told Freddy he would need an OK from a staff physician to review Cousin Eustace's records. "Today that would be Dr. Bangladesh," the orderly said, picking up the phone. "I'll page him. He might still be around."

Freddy looked at the patients watching television. Others were sleeping on couches, even on the floor. Various isolatos sat or stood, preoccupied with their thoughts and seemingly oblivious to their environment.

Charles White twisted the crucifix hanging from his neck. He said, "We are held in lower regard than barnyard

"It's probably some sort of freak weather condition. Nothing ever happens around here at this time of year."

animals. This is a warehouse for the damned."

"I've been told there's a war raging in heaven," Freddy said.

Charlie fluffed his curly fringe of red hair and Freddy saw large yellow flecks of dandruff spring into the air. "More than war, it's a reckoning," White said. "From your flippant tone I can tell you aren't picking up on this. I'm here. I'm on the inside. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought, and his angels, and prevailed not. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world. He was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

"So that's what's wrong with the world?" Freddy said. The tumbler on the steel door's lock rattled and the short man Freddy had encountered in the parking lot walked in. His black mustache had thawed and, while it was thick, joining his lip to his hawklike nose, it was no wider than a postage stamp. He wore a pair of half-frame glasses that were steamed from the weather. Freddy watched as he reached up and hung his homburg and overcoat on a wall hook in the meds station. Although his face was ruddy, he did not seem to have suffered especially from the cold. If anything, he seemed invigorated. He slipped on a white lab coat and clipped a beeper to his belt. When he spotted Freddy through the office window, his eyes twinkled and he walked back into the ward. "Va-boom!" he said. "Ah-ho-yeah! So we meet again. I'm Oscar Bangladesh. How can I help you?"

"I'm Freddy Blaine from the city hospital. And this is my stepmother, Iona Gordon, wife of the late Dr. William Blaine. I wondered if I could take a look at Mr. Eckstrom's records. He's a relative. My cousin."

Dr. Bangladesh escorted the visitors back into the office and dropped the venetian blinds over the window. Freddy, who was 6'1", towered over the psychiatrist. "New shoes?" Freddy said. "Two-tones. Very snazzy."

The doctor wore a pair of white-and-brown Bostonian shoes with smooth toe caps. "Hah! Correct. Christmas present," Dr. Bangladesh said. "Special order from Massachusetts. It's expensive as hell being a little person."

"I never considered that," Mrs. Gordon said. "But it must be true. All the stuff in your house must be different. Your furniture, I mean."

"So true. I live in a gingerbread house," Dr. Bangladesh said. "It requires constant attention."

From the ward Charlie White called, "It gets green mold on it. Or he gets hungry and eats it."

"Isn't that amazing?" Dr. Bangladesh whispered. "The most incredible sense of hearing I've ever encountered. And

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he can calculate numbers like a wizard. Baseball stats are his thing."

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"Yes, Charles, periodically I become ravenous and devour an entire house. Of course! In fact, I could eat a skyscraper right now! The Empire State Building—an appetizer. Hah! Va-boom!"

Mrs. Gordon realized she was staring at the little man. Apart from his new shoes, Dr. Bangladesh wore a brown three-piece gabardine suit that was beginning to shine with age and a dirty yellow tie festooned with miniature golfers driving off from tees. He stood before Freddy and Mrs. Gordon with a square hand tucked into his vest, Napoléon style.

Freddy said, "Eustace doesn't look so hot. There's motor impairment on the whole left side of his body, slurred speech, his eye——"

Dr. Bangladesh smoothed his bushy eyebrows, then steepled his blunt fingers and took on an air of doctorly concern. "Yes, Mr. Eckstrom. A stroke, but there was all the previous physical impairment from a fall he suffered. He hasn't done well here. Twelve years now and nothing but trouble. Few have sufficient ego strength to withstand the rigors of long-term confinement. Have a seat, both of you, please."

"No, thanks. I'm going back out there," Mrs. Gordon said. "I can't breathe." She brushed past Freddy and stepped out into the ward.

Dr. Bangladesh snapped on a floor fan. "Does it really *smell* in here? People say it does. I've been here so long, I can't tell anymore." He pulled a manila-backed chart from a battered gray filing cabinet, glancing at it before passing it to Freddy. "Mr. Eckstrom suffered a series of small strokes, was sent to the city hospital, and when he stabilized, he was returned to the ward. He's been on heparin and there's been bruising. We didn't know he had family. Is there anyone who might——"

"Take him in? I don't think so," Freddy said. "Not possible."

Dr. Bangladesh's hand clung to the top drawer of the filing cabinet. He hung his head and looked down at the floor. "Well, I'm afraid he can't last much longer."

Freddy poked his head out into the ward and took a look at the back of the room. Eustace was again on his knees with the ketchup container. "He told me someone is pumping gas into the ward."

"Someone *is* pumping gas in here," Charles White said from a dining table chair. Freddy watched him scratch his fringe of red hair.

Dr. Bangladesh stepped into the ward, hiking up his slacks. He placed his hands on his hips, large hips for such a small man. "I've already explained this to you, Charles. Our ventilation system is old. It's inadequate."

"Bullcrap! They've been making buildings for thousands of years." White slammed his fist on the table. "We've got windows! Why can't we open those windows? There's gas in this suckhole."

Dr. Bangladesh looked at the floor and shook his head wearily. "And what sort of gas would that be, Mr. White?"

A woman who was sitting alone in a dark corner crying wiped tears from her eyes with the sleeves of her pajamas and sat up defiantly. She had a British accent. "It's vaguely . . . buttholish. We could do with some fresh air, Doctor. Everyone is turning yellow."

From the back of the ward a faraway voice cried, "This motherfucker smells like a ripe ass."

A thin man in his 70s pulled off his plaid snap-billed cap and slapped it against his thigh. "Smells like cat pee," he said.

Stephens clapped his hands and pointed a finger at the old man. "Hen Pierce, you calm down, mister! I'll have you in an isolation cell so fast you won't know what hit you."

"Are you talking to me?" Pierce said. "What I said was mild. People are throwing the F word around again."

Charles White turned to Freddy. "Zyklon B, Dr. Blaine. You're in it with him. They must have sent you over here from Germany with a new supply."

Freddy said, "You're a fraud, Mr. White. All I'm hearing from you is clichéd nuthouse ideation. I think they should give you a bottle of Dilantin and discharge you. Get a job! Hack it out there in the real world."

Dr. Bangladesh pulled a roll of wintergreen Life Savers from his pocket and peeled off the foil top. He put four of the candies in his mouth. "Think of it like this, Charles. If the staff were pumping gas in, would we not also be asphyxiating ourselves?"

"Selective infusions. You're never here for them, Oscar," Charles White said. "Once in a blue moon you pass through the joint and that's it. All you do is play golf."

"Don't attack me. Your argument just doesn't hold up and you know it. Who plays golf when it's 20 below?" Dr. Bangladesh removed his half frames and wiped them with his sleeve. There were beads of perspiration on his forehead. He looked at Freddy. "It's hot in here, I'll give him that."

Charles White said, "Two things: hot and no oxygen."

"Bring it up in group on Tuesday. In the meantime, kindly subdue yourself! I'm tired too."

"You are tired," Charlie said. "Very tired, Oscar. Not good at all."

Stephens set *The Sea Wolf* on the charge desk. "Knock it off, Charlie, or I'll come over there! Those isolation cells are ready, willing and able. I'm counting to three!"

Mr. White turned away and plopped down in a chair before the TV set. He draped his arms along the sides of the chair and sulked. Freddy watched him for a moment. His head and right hand twitched every few seconds. Suddenly he got up and changed channels. Another patient snapped out of a hypnotic daze to protest, and the two started arguing. They could barely be heard over the high volume of the TV.

Dr. Bangladesh waved Freddy back

"Organ donor, my ass!"

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into the office and shut the door. He lowered his voice and said, "Being in the presence of a manic personality is exhausting for me. They suck up all the energy in the room and leave you drained. Every time I walk in the door, there he is, ready to assail me with the most unimaginable kind of stupid crap you could ever think of. A 45-minute rap over nothing."

Freddy studied the doctor's face. "He's right, though. You don't look very well. Your left pupil is a pinpoint and the right is dilated."

Dr. Bangladesh took a step back, alarmed. "Really? What does that mean, medically? I'm not a doctor, I'm a psychiatrist. Is that some cardinal signal?"

"Probably it means nothing," Freddy said. "Just tired, that's all."

"No, there's more," Dr. Bangladesh said. "I feel sicker than a dog. Everything is swirly. An attack of hypoglycemia?" Dr. Bangladesh braced himself against the wall. "Damn! I feel actively sick. I'm dizzy as shit. You don't think I might have an aneurysm or something, do you?"

"Get something to eat," Freddy said. "You haven't got an aneurysm. You're tired."

Dr. Bangladesh held his head in his hands. "Alas, the carcass makes itself known again; I can't think. Ugh! It has to be hypoglycemia. I have a very rapid metabolism. I need to eat. Feel free to sit in here. You will be more comfortable. Excuse me, I have to go eat a little bite and lie down for a minute in the staff lounge."

The doctor's two-tone shoes squeaked as he walked across the oak floor. Freddy watched him reach up to open the heavy steel door and then disappear. As the door slammed shut, Freddy shook his head. Either the job was getting to the man or he had never been quite right in the first place. He closed the door of the office, sat down and began to page through the Eustace Eckstrom chart. What was there was much as he had expected. Eustace had dangerously high blood pressure readings, but there were no recorded vascular studies or MRIs. He was being treated with beta-blockers and diuretics that were adequate but not exactly state of the art. He was receiving stupendous doses of the blood thinner heparin, also Haldol for auditory hallucinations, and large doses of a standard antidepressant drug—a tricyclic that was too much, really, for a person with a tricky circulatory system and funny heart rhythms. On top of that, they were giving Eustace valproate for seizures. Cousin Eustace had a stated IQ of 82. Freddy flipped his tie over his shoulder as a nurse with small breasts, a pitted face and a low-slung ass came into the office. "Are you Dr. Blaine?"

Freddy set the chart down and said, "Yes. What's wrong?"

"It's Dr. Bangladesh. Please, come with me," she said. "He's out."

Freddy and the nurse ran down two flights of stairs to the staff lounge, a small room with a table and chairs, a refrigerator, microwave oven and a coffeepot. Dr. Bangladesh was lying on a Naugahyde couch, bathed in sweat. One of his new shoes was lying on the floor.

"What's going on here?" Freddy said.

"I don't know," the nurse said. "He was all right one minute and then he just started acting like he was . . . out of it. I couldn't make any sense out of him. He said something about being gassed."

Freddy laughed. "Gassed, huh?"

"Yes. He was sweating furiously and then he passed out."

Freddy unbuttoned the little man's jacket, vest and shirt. "Any known health problems? Heart disease? Diabetes?"

The nurse thought for a moment. "He guzzles water and goes to the bathroom constantly."

"Where's the house physician?" Freddy said as he removed the doctor's lab coat, jacket and tie. "I don't even work here."

The nurse lowered her voice and said, "The house doctor, Zarkov? We don't want him. He's a bungler."

Freddy took the nurse's stethoscope and began to listen to Oscar's heart. "Meningitis in this place?"

"No," the nurse said.

"Get me a glucose meter and a glucagon kit," Freddy said. He expertly moved the stethoscope about the doctor's chest and then began to poke his abdomen.

When the nurse returned, Freddy said, "I can hear a squeak in his lungs. His pulse is 170. His organs feel normal. Run a check on his sugar. Have they got tuberculosis?"

"No." The nurse pricked the doctor's finger with a spring-loaded lancet. She cocked the device and did it again, looking up at them in frustration. "I can't get any blood," she said. "His hands are freezing."

Freddy took the lancet from her, recocked it and popped Dr. Bangladesh in the earlobe. He squeezed a drop of blood onto the test strip. "Never fails," Freddy said. "Ready? Here we go: countdown!" The glucose meter flashed 45, and second by second the numbers began to run backward as pulses of red light flashed through the test strip. "How does one acquire a name like Oscar Bangladesh?" Freddy said.

"It's not his real name," the nurse said. "His parents are very high up in India, I think. Maharajas or something. Did he lay that 500-watt smile on you?"

"Yeah. 'Va-boom! Ah-ho-yeah!'"

The nurse laughed. "His parents were pissed that he didn't marry a traditional woman. What they don't know is that he's gay. At least that's the rumor. It must be true—he listens to Broadway show tunes. And here's the clincher—he has three Burmese cats!"

"Three? That cinches it. He's a flamer."

The glucose meter beeped and the nurse handed it to Freddy. "He's down to 28."

"That's pretty low. Saw a guy walk in with a seven once, and he was . . . walking! Look." He held up one of Dr. Bangladesh's tiny hands. "The tips of these three fingers look like pin cushions. That's why you couldn't get any blood—he's got calluses from self-testing. And look here," he said, pulling up the doctor's shirt. "See these bruises all over his abdomen? Injection sites. He's a diabetic, overweight." Freddy removed the syringe from the emergency kit and squirted the diluting solution into the

bottle of powdered glucagon. He shook it for a second, drew the mixed solution back into the syringe and injected it into the doctor's thigh. "What's the date on the package?"

The nurse picked up the box and peered. "It's 15 months old. It expired three months ago."

Freddy said, "It should work fine. Essentially there's a thousand times more, or so, than he needs, and he's a little guy."

The nurse said, "You really are a pretty cool customer, Doctor. Where do you practice?"

"At City. Trauma surgery. In the eye of the storm. Only then am I calm. I cannot say why that is so."

The nurse preened her hair. "Would you like to go out for a drink sometime?"

"I'm pretty busy," Freddy said. "I work. It's about all I do. But thanks just the same."

"You aren't gay are you?"

"I don't have any Burmese cats," Freddy said. He lifted up Oscar's bare foot, pointing at his little toe. "This little piggy has bunionettes," he said.

The nurse laughed. "You mean he's too small to get actual bunions?"

"Bunionettes, a.k.a. tailor's bunions, commonly occur with bunions. He's going to end up with a hammertoe."

The nurse laughed. "A hammertoe!"

"Check out the proximal interphalangeal joint on his middle toe. It's swollen. He's got a corn on it. It's a hammertoe fucking waiting to happen."

"It's just bent a little," the nurse said.

"The hammertoe is the converse of the mallet toe, but his metatarsal phalangeal joint is contracted as well. Let me revise my opinion. I predict a claw toe, which is the super-whompo-jumbo combo—hammer and mallet. Bad shoes don't cause claw toes." He kicked the brown shoe on the floor. "No one knows really what does. It can be something systemic like diabetes. Probably just that. When I eyed his foot in the beginning, I was thinking in terms of Charcot's joint. A breakdown of the ligaments and tendons—joint dislocation. This is a very strange foot, nurse."

"Nancy. My name is Nancy. What's yours?"

"Frederick. See here, he has no hair on his foot or toes. He's got shit for peripheral circulation. The nails are thick with fungus. Fissures, dry skin. Ought to try some Sporanox for those nails. It works. The metatarsal head of the big toe is pushed medially and the phalanx is pointing toward the second toe, see?"

"Yes. So what?"

"It's no big deal," Freddy said, "in the cosmic sense. But take an interest in medicine. It's your job. Don't you like it? Aren't you fascinated by it?"

"I hate this place. And I'm beginning to hate you."

The color returned to Dr. Bangladesh's face and he opened his eyes. Freddy said, "Welcome back to the very strange world of rock and roll, Doctor."

Dr. Bangladesh looked at him without comprehension. "Where am I? What happened? It felt like I was drowning. Some horrible Godzilla-like reptilian monster was strangling me."

Freddy said, "You just had an insulin reaction, my friend."

"That's not possible!" Dr. Bangladesh sat up. "I vehemently deny that scabrous accusation. I have an extremely rapid metabolism. I eat 9000 calories a day. I vaguely have hypoglycemia. I'm overworked. Hell, they work me like a goddamn hound. Where are my glasses?"

The nurse picked up his glasses from the floor and handed them to him. As soon as he put them on he looked at Freddy. "The work of 40 Sabine slaves and 17 horses and never so much as a thank you!"

"It's not against the law to be a diabetic," Freddy said.

"I'm not!" Dr. Bangladesh said.

"Hey, brother, I'm just sayin', you know." Freddy reached over and picked up the doctor's shoe. A lace was broken.

Dr. Bangladesh snatched the shoe from Freddy's hand. "I demand confidentiality on this, from both of you."

Freddy said, "You had a severe insulin reaction. I just want to make sure you know what you are doing. Get a second opinion. You're just feeling rowdy from the incident. I'm not going to say fucking shit to anyone, but I'm right and you've been told."

The little doctor snarled, "Swear."

Freddy held his palm up and backed out of the room. "I don't know nothin'."

Freddy took the stairs back to Ward Six. In a moment the nurse, Nancy, caught up with him and pressed a card with her number on it into his hand. Her cheeks were flushed. She said, "Call me."

Freddy pocketed the card and said, "See that Dr. Bangladesh gets something to eat. Tell him if he doesn't educate himself about diabetes, he's a goner."

The nurse stood before Freddy with her hands on her hips. She said, "You won't call, will you? Well, you can just go to hell!"

Freddy buzzed back into the ward and waited for Stephens to open the office. As he was returning Cousin Eustace's file, he spotted a medical bag lying open on the floor. Inside it was a glucose meter and two portable insulin syringe cases. Also two bottles of Dexedrine. He wondered why Dr. Bangladesh would be taking speed. Probably for kicks. He closed the bag and stepped back out into the ward.

His stepmother was in the middle of the dayroom working Marla's hair over with a brush and a can of hair spray. An array of cosmetics had been laid out on a table. She shifted her weight back on one heel and studied Marla's face. After

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examining Dr. Bangladesh, Freddy found it hard to factor a giantess into his consciousness. Marla was huge. Mrs. Gordon was saying, "Your hair is very dark. I think we could go with some more rouge."

"We have recreation in the gym," Marla said. "The men let me play basketball with them. They always choose me. I'm good at softball too. You know, I was watching a rerun of *Cheers* the other day and the bartender, Sam—the one who was supposed to be a baseball player—came out from behind the bar and was walking around, bending over and stuff, and I was shocked to see how skinny his legs were. Toothpicks. I don't think it's realistic for the audience to believe that he used to be a professional ballplayer with those thin legs. From the top up, maybe. But not after you get a load of those legs. I used to enjoy the program until I made that observation. I can't get into it anymore. Sam should lift leg weights or something. That guy Woody has a pretty nice body, but too many of the characters on that show are bald. Count 'em. Count baldies next time you check it out. Plus, nobody can be as stupid as Woody. With a chick he would never get to first base."

"I think they're both cute," Mrs. Gordon said.

Marla said, "Frasier is a cue ball. Sam has cotton candy for hair, blow-drier hair. The post office guy is another baldy and he makes me depressed. The fat guy has hair but he's so fat! And it's that wiry kind of hair. Imagine a ton of that all over your pillows or in your bathroom sink. Ecchh! It springs! I can clog dance. I mean . . . I'm learning how."

Freddy plopped down in a chair next to Marla and said, "What's going on here, some kind of total makeover?" Without waiting for an answer he said, "Christ! I'm having a nicotine fit and I gave away my cigarettes."

Marla said, "Mr. Stephens smokes. Bum a coffin nail offa him."

"He's gone," Freddy said. "Where in fuck, I don't know."

Mrs. Gordon gave Freddy a reproving look. "Stop swearing so much. We're just having a little girl fun. Calm down and check this out. You're going to like it."

She placed her sunglasses on Marla's face. "Perfect, no?" She handed Marla a little hand mirror so she could see herself.

Marla said, "I want a man with a head full of hair, not some cue ball."

Mrs. Gordon snorted.

"Some damn cue ball with a hatchet face," Marla said. "It wrecks the entertainment value of the show, which sometimes has good lines."

Mrs. Gordon shuddered with laughter. Marla pounded her fist against her knee, threw back her head and roared.

"Christ, have you two been smoking a joint, or what?" Freddy said.

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"We took a hit off a doobie, so what?" Mrs. Gordon said. "Don't be such a tightass."

"What, you can smoke dope here?"

"Not officially," Marla said.

There was a clamor in the hallway. In a moment the steel door swung open as Charlie White and Stephens struggled to push three aluminum food carts into the ward. Freddy gave them a hand setting up the carts as patients began to line up, selecting trays and utensils.

Once the carts were in place, Charlie White slipped on an apron. "Christmas dinner, folks! And not a bad one for a change. Hot turkey and dressing, the vegetable medley, spice cake with raisins. Mira, turn off the TV! You, Hen P, quit that grab-assing. There's plenty for everyone. And you two, over there laughing. Cut it out. I mean it."

Marla mimicked a scene from *Cheers*. "'Can I get you another beer, Norm?' 'Yeah, sure, sticklaig. 'Cause those ain't legs, them are laigs.'"

Before Charlie White began to ladle out food, he cleared his throat. "Dear Lord, thanks for the food, leftovers though they may be, and the roof over our heads. Thanks for the crappy weather since it canceled the VA Christmas entertainment. That was a blessing. Amen."

Marla and Mrs. Gordon joined the line, picking up serving trays while Freddy helped Stephens pull a case of milk out of the refrigerator and set it next to the serving table. When Stephens gave Freddy a cigarette and a light, Freddy said, "The devil has left the premises!"

Charlie White said, "He's gone. Through the power of dynamic prayer, I can make the sick well. Hemophiliacs, I can cure by the dozen. Or when inclined, I lay a spell on you."

"You better be careful there, Mr. White," Mrs. Gordon said, her eyebrows raised. "They call him Shootin' Bill."

Charlie looked at Freddy. "Who? Him?"

"That's right," Freddy said, taking a big drag on the cigarette. "I'm Shootin' Bill. And I'll shoot ya."

Charlie's face dissolved into a warm smile. "Oh yeah?"

"Take heed. I'm deadly," Freddy said. "So look out!"

"Or you'll be in big trouble, Charlie White," Marla said.

"It's true, I'm a malefactor," Freddy said. "Check it out. The Christmas program got canceled, but two mysterious strangers arrive on the scene. Angels? Possibly. Watch this." Freddy moved away from the serving cart and went to the tables, performing a magic trick he often used to great effect with the children in the city hospital ER. "The disappearing hankie. Where did it go? Why, nobody knows."

"What else can you do?" Hen Pierce said. "Is that it?"

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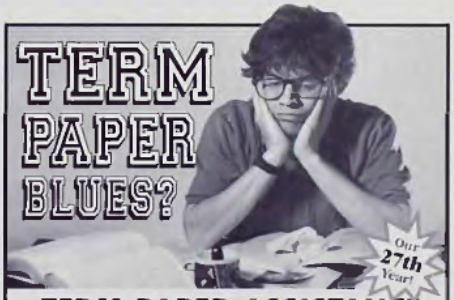

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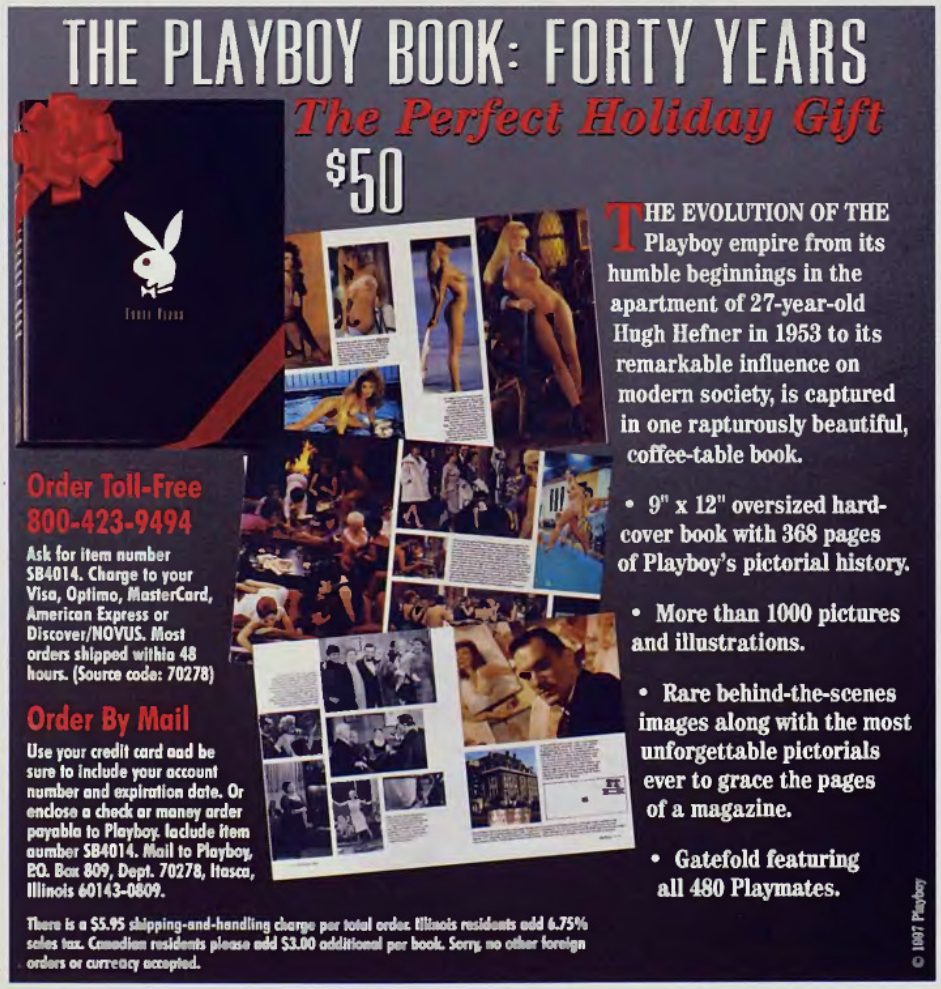
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Freddy picked up four saltshakers and began to juggle, mugging to the audience. The slower patients responded with peals of laughter. "I can't always make the sick well, and I cannot turn water into wine," he said, enlarging the arc of the spinning saltshakers. He would pretend to let one fall, only to kick it back into the configuration with the side of his shoe. The patients waited for him to drop one, but Freddy was adept and well practiced. He edged over to a table and fed two pepper shakers into the arc. His cigarette was pursed in the middle of his mouth and he squinted his eyes against the smoke. "What I can do—I can patty-patty-bop-bop-wop-bop-a-shoo-bop."

Mrs. Gordon said, "You're getting salt all over everything."

Hen Pierce said, "He reminds me of that ice-skater, what's-his-face."

"Brian Boitano," Marla said.

"No," Hen Pierce said. "Scott or Kent or somebody. A fairy."

"Already told ya. They call me Shootin' Bill," Freddy said. "If I had my six-gun I would demonstrate my dead-eye aim, but firearms are prohibited in this ward." He caught the saltshakers, set them on the table and dusted himself off.

"Shootin' bull is more like it," Hen Pierce said.

The steel door banged open and Dr. Bangladesh stepped into the ward. His eyes sparkled and his entire condition seemed much improved. "I'm as hungry as a bear," he said. His shoes squeaked as he walked over to the food carts.

Marla set down her food tray, fluffed out her dress and said, "I'm really feeling happy today. I will dance for you. Guys? C'mon!" Marla stepped away from the table and began to dance and sing, "Have a holly jolly Christmas, it's the best time of the year. . . ." She danced like a marionette on strings. Her massive shoulders became liquid and she let her dangling elbows and wrists jackknife akimbo. Her shoe leather slapped against the hard oak floor.

Charlie White said, "All right then, enjoy yourself. Just remember, it all comes to nothing. Our trials and tribulations on this earth are lamentable."

"So does everything come to nothing," Dr. Bangladesh said, taking a bite of turkey. "Please, Charles, no more of your negativity. I've been through absolute hell today——"

"And you think I haven't?" Charlie White said. He handed Eustace a carton of milk and a green plastic bowl filled with cellophane packets of saltine crackers. "OK, Doc, though I've been grazed by every form of failure in the world, I'm not just your plain ordinary loser, and I resent the way you imply that I am."

Dr. Bangladesh set down his fork and picked up a carton of milk. "Have you been taking your meds, Charles?"

"Don't you give me your evil eye,

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Oscar, the one you learned in Gypsy camps in Afghanistan. I've been taking my meds—taking my meds, taking my meds! There! I've told you three times: Yes!"

"The man takes his meds," Freddy said.

"For God's sake, Charlie, chill!" Stephens said.

Dr. Bangladesh looked over the top of his half frames. "We all like the highs, but the lows aren't so good, Charles. I'm going to have to review your chart. I really hope you don't start in with your multiple personality shenanigans. I will not tolerate it!"

An orderly from another ward buzzed to be let in. He said, "I've been looking all over for you, Dr. Bangladesh. There's a guy on his way in a tow truck. Who's on the damn phones, anyhow? I've called up here a million times."

"I'm serving dinner," Stephens said. "Marla, knock off with the dancing and sit down."

"Triple A? Is on its way?" Dr. Bangladesh said, walking rapidly to the window. "Send him up when he gets here. The Wienermobile has a flat." He raised up on his tiptoes and looked through the mesh wire. "I can't see anything. You can never get a cab to come out here, and I don't want to be stranded all night." Dr. Bangladesh removed an Allen wrench from his key ring, unlocked the protective mesh guard and cupped his hands on the steamy window. "I can't see anything! When in the hell is the last time anyone cleaned these windows?"

"Never," Charlie White said. "Since never."

The psychiatrist wiped his small hands on his white lab coat. "Yech! Nicotine," he said. "It's terrible. A rotten dirty mess. Somebody get me some window cleaner. Stephens! Call down for some window cleaner and some terrycloth towels. For crying out loud."

Stephens walked over to the call desk and picked up the phone. Dr. Bangladesh returned to his meal. Without bothering to sit down, he began shoving turkey and dressing into his mouth. He looked over at Freddy and said, "I make no apologies, I like to eat. What the hell. I won the pie-eating contest at the Fourth of July picnic. No one can outeat me. Ate a huckleberry pie, a raisin pie, apple, cherry, pumpkin, peach, apricot, blueberry. These were good pies. The secret to a good pie is the crust. And the secret to the crust is lard. When I was done, my little belly stuck out like a bowling ball. Mr. Stephens, what sort of scrumptious goodies do we have for dessert?"

"The spice cake," Charles White said. "Or chocolate-flavored tapioca."

"Give me three of each and call an ambulance," Dr. Bangladesh said. "Hah!"

"You can't get Freddy to eat anything," Mrs. Gordon said. "He's skinny beyond belief."

Dr. Bangladesh took off his half frames, wiping the lenses on his coat. "You are anorexic, Dr. Blaine."

"I got sick in Africa," Freddy said.

"Whereabouts? I spent seven years in Zaire," Dr. Bangladesh said. "Before the virus."

"I was there," Freddy said, "after the virus."

A staff custodian came into the ward with an armful of towels and three spray bottles. Dr. Bangladesh said, "Bring that stuff over here. I want to show you something. Come here. This ward is a mess. Look at the lights, for instance. Half the bulbs need to be replaced."

The custodian looked up at the ceiling. "Hey! This isn't my area. I don't even work in this building. I just brought up this stuff. They told me you wanted it. I'm supposed to be on my lunch break."

Dr. Bangladesh took a towel and a bottle of window cleaner and went over to the first alcove. He said, "Some people, professional cleaners, use squeegees and a bucket of ammonia water. Some use vinegar. That's fine if you're on a skyscraper 100 stories high, where every moment is a peril. Ah! What adventure! Well, for small jobs like this, nothing beats a commercial product like Windex or Glass Plus and a good absorbent towel." He squirted some glass cleaner on a section of the window, stopped to fine tune the spray nozzle and began rubbing the window with a towel. "Start from the top and work down. I'm too short actually and there's no ladder. Fie!"

Marla got up and went over to the doctor. He handed her a spray bottle and a towel. "You fold the towel in quarters, Marla, spray the glass, and work from the top down."

"I know what to do," Marla said. With her long arms, she was able to cover the entire top of the window in a few swaths. When she was through she looked at the towel. "It's filthy."

"Turn the towel to a clean surface and hit it again," the doctor said.

"This is the most rotten dirty window I've ever seen in my life," Marla said.

After the second try, Dr. Bangladesh handed her a clean towel. "Hit it again. Repeat the whole process."

Marla sprayed the window, and when she began to wipe it down the glass squeaked. "Hear that?" Dr. Bangladesh tucked his right hand in his vest and bounced on his toes. "It's squeaking. You're finally getting it clean. Ho-yeah!"

Marla said, "I need another towel. I haven't got it all off yet."

The patients at dinner fell silent and listened to the squeaking of the glass.

Charlie said, "He's never here. We never see him, and now he comes in like this just to show off, bossing everyone around."

"Look! Guys!" Marla said. "You can see the river. You can see the city lights. Cars going by. Cool!"

Cousin Eustace moved next to Marla and took in the view. He said, "Cars pass by the window."

"The nighttime is the right time to clean a window, any window," Dr. Bangladesh said. "The sun's glare will fool you. The nighttime is the right time! Heh-heh." Dr. Bangladesh polished a section of glass and then handed Cousin Eustace a towel. "Wipe down the mesh with this wet one. I don't think these windows have been cleaned in 50 years."

"I want to do another one," Marla said. "At last we can see."

Dr. Bangladesh unlocked the wire mesh guards on the next set of windows and Marla immediately set to work.

A few patients got up from their tables

"It's Christmas morning. Where do you think I've been all night?!"

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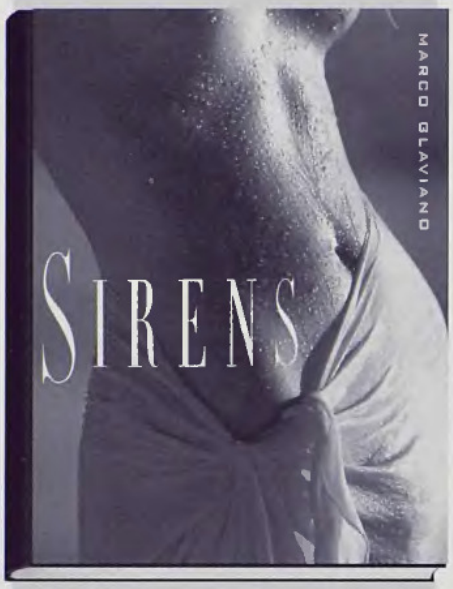

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and came over to look out the window. "Whoa!" Hen Pierce said. "There's icecycles on them trees. *Staglatites!*"

"Stalactites," Charles White said. "Those are *stalactites.*"

"There are so many of them," Pierce said.

At this, everyone got up and went to the windows.

"Don't just stand there gawking, all you lazybones," Dr. Bangladesh said. "Pick up a towel and get to work. I'll open the rest of the screens."

"This is great," Marla said.

"It's fun," Cousin Eustace said. "I like it. Goddamn it! Look at that! A shooting star! Right through the trees."

"I saw it," Marla said.

"Where?" Hen Pierce said.

"God! Look! There goes another one!" Marla said.

"Shit, yes," Hen said. "It lasted too."

Dr. Bangladesh said, "It was no hallucination." He handed Marla another towel. "Who did your hair, girl? You look, like, great."

"She looks terrific," Charlie said. "I've been saying that all along."

Mrs. Gordon removed her blazer and draped it on the back of her chair. "What are you doing?" Freddy said.

"I'm going to pitch in too," she said.

Freddy said, "Wait until tomorrow: the three-day pot hangover."

Mrs. Gordon said, "It's like Tom Sawyer whitewashing a fence. That thing. It's infectious."

"Little Oscar isn't doing diddle," Charlie said. "All he's doing is just handing out towels."

"Charlie!" Stephens said. "Quit your fucking goddamn bitching all the time!"

Mrs. Gordon began to clean the windowsills. "I wish I had windows like this," she said. "They have to be worth a fortune."

"I'd jump," Charlie said. "But it's not high enough for suicide."

"Make a note, Stephens," Dr. Bangladesh said. "Mr. White has been tonguing his meds. That's why he's so grumpy. Heh-heh. Come on, get with it, Charlie. We are all having a good time over here. It's very simple, you know. Human beings need to have purpose, we need meaning. It always comes down to just exactly that."

Charlie laughed. "You're the man who said it all comes to nothing, that you went through hell today."

"That was before I ate. All my troubles are gone. I feel great. Ah-ho-yeah! It's a beautiful night. The windows are clean. We've got a clear view. The majestic oaks and maples are covered with a profusion of genuine ice-crystal stalactites. It's a wonderful life. It's just going to get better and better and better, on and on, forever and forever. Come on, take a look, Mr. White. On a midnight clear, you can see forever."

"You're the one who needs lithium,"

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White said. "What's with all this big-time cheer?"

"I feel good, man!" Dr. Bangladesh said. "Hey, Dr. Blaine, eat your cake—it will make you feel better."

"You say it with such conviction." Freddy looked at the cake before him. It looked dry and nasty.

"Trust me," Dr. Bangladesh said.

"He's right, Freddy," Iona said. "You have to eat. I don't know what you think you're doing."

Cousin Eustace said, "Go on, Fred. Eat something."

Freddy bent forward and took a whiff of the cake. It had been hard to single out any one particular odor since he walked into the hospital. All the odors seemed to meld. "A scrumptious goody," he said.

"Eat the goddamn thing before I stuff it down your throat," Stephens said.

Cousin Eustace snagged a piece of the cake with his thumb and shoved it in his mouth. "Look!"

"Now I'm really not going to eat it," Freddy said.

"Eustace ate cake," Charlie said. "He actually ate something new. Hurrah!"

Cousin Eustace said, "The war in heaven is over."

Stephens popped over to the table and set a fresh piece of cake before Freddy.

Marla said, "It's happy cake."

Freddy said, "I hate cake."

Cousin Eustace brought the fruit basket up from the back of the ward and peeled away the cellophane gift wrapping. Freddy selected a red apple and took a bite.

"Yeah." Cousin Eustace rubbed his hands together with enthusiasm. "Charlie told the old devil to get lost."

"Good going, Charlie. I knew you had it in you," Dr. Bangladesh said. "Tra-la-la! It came upon a midnight clear."

"It's about time I got a little credit," Charlie said petulantly. He reached into the fruit basket and selected a Bartlett pear. "Come on, everybody. There's fresh fruit."

The patients took fruit from the basket but then gravitated back to the windows, dragging their chairs with them so they could sit and look outside. Only the first alcove had been done properly. The second had been abandoned and dirty towels lay all about the floor. Hen Pierce bit into a peeled orange and had to jump back from the spray. "I hope there's more shooting stars. I like them long-lasting dudes."

Outside, headlights from the cars passing the state hospital reflected off the crystal daggers of ice hanging from the trees, causing them to shimmer. The night air was clear and the star show profuse. A hush fell over the patients of Ward Six until Charles White broke the silence. "It's a magnificent sight. A good omen portending the remission of evil. It's Christmas."

Freddy said, "The Christmas spirit has been eluding me this year."

Dr. Bangladesh said, "One of those stars belongs to you alone, Doctor."

Freddy shrugged. "If one of those stars belongs to me," he said, "I presume it to be a dim and unlucky one. A celestial dud. I will cling to it nonetheless and nevermore will I complain."

"Look! Another one," Oscar shouted. "A real shooter. Va-boom!"

Hen Pierce nudged closer to the windows, licking orange juice from his fingers. "Those are the biggest, the best and the most. Never in all my life have I seen such beautiful staglamites."

Timequake

(continued from page 112)

oversize testicles hung down in full view."

Trout paused again.

"The police asked the woman where the guy was. The woman said she didn't know what guy they were talking about," said Trout. "One of the cops saw the testicles hanging down from the rafter and asked what they were. She said they were Chinese temple bells. He believed her. He said he had always wanted to hear Chinese temple bells.

"He gave them a whack with his billy club, but there was no sound. So he hit them again, a lot harder, a whole lot harder. Do you know what the guy on the rafter shrieked?" Trout asked me.

I said I didn't.

"He shrieked, 'Ting-a-ling, you son of a bitch!'"

Trout might have said, and it can be said of me as well, that he created *caricatures* rather than characters. His animus against so-called *mainstream literature*, moreover, wasn't peculiar to him. It was generic among writers of science fiction.

With some trepidation, I told Trout in the summer of 2001 about my advice to a man soon to be expelled from prison. He asked if I had heard from this person again, if I knew what had become of him in the intervening five years, or in the intervening ten years, if we wanted to count the rerun. I hadn't and didn't.

He asked if I myself had ever tried to join a church, just for the hell of it, to find out what that was like. *He* had. The closest I ever came to that, I said, was when my second-wife-to-be, Jill Krementz, and I thought it would be cute, and also ritzy, to be married in the Little Church Around the Corner, a Disneyesque Episcopal house of worship on East 29th Street off Fifth Avenue in Manhattan.

"When they found out I was a divorced person," I said, "they prescribed all sorts of penitent services I was to perform before I would be clean enough to be married there."

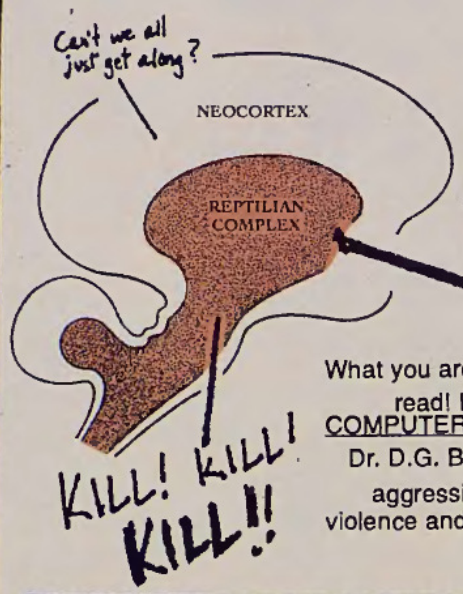
"There you are," said Trout. "Imagine all the chickenshit you'd have to go through if you were an ex-con. And if that poor son of a bitch who wrote you really did find a church to accept him, he could easily be back in prison."

"For what?" I said. "For robbing the poor box?"

"No," said Trout, "for delighting Jesus Christ by shooting dead a doctor coming to work in an abortion mill."

I am so old that I can remember when the word *fuck* was thought to be so full of bad magic that no respectable publication would print it. Another old joke:

Una cerveza de primera elaborada en Mazatlán, México desde 1900. Imported by Barton Beers, Chicago, IL ©1997



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THE BRAIN'S REPTILIAN COMPLEX IS RESPONSIBLE FOR AGGRESSION, TERRITORIALITY AND SELF-PRESERVATION. CYBERDIVERSION THEORY SAYS WE SHOULD ACCEPT, NOT SUPPRESS, THESE PRIMAL INSTINCTS AND DIVERT THEM ONTO THE INTERNET AT HEAT.NET, WHERE THEY CAN'T HARM ANYONE... *HEAT™ IS THE ANSWER!!*

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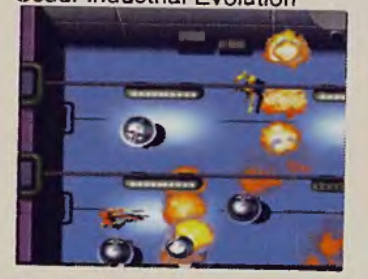

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"Don't say 'fuck' in front of the b-a-b-y."

A word just as full of poison, supposedly, but which could be spoken in polite company, provided the speaker's tone implied fear and loathing, was *Communism*, denoting an activity as commonly and innocently practiced in many primitive societies as fucking.

So it was a particularly elegant commentary on the patriotism and the nice-Nellyism during the deliberately insane Vietnam war when the satirist Paul Krassner printed red-white-and-blue bumper stickers that said FUCK COMMUNISM!

•

And Kilgore Trout said at the clambake, with Laurel and Hardy in a rowboat only 50 yards offshore, that young people liked movies with a lot of shooting because the movies showed that dying didn't hurt at all, that people with guns could be thought of as "freelance anesthetists."

He was so happy! He was so popular! He was all dolled up in the tuxedo and boiled shirt and crimson cummerbund and bow tie that had belonged to Zoltan Pepper. I stood behind him in his suite in order to tie the tie for him, just as my big brother had done for me before I myself could tie a bow tie.

There on the beach, whatever Trout said produced laughter and applause. He couldn't believe it! He said the pyramids and Stonehenge were built in a time of very feeble gravity, when boulders could be tossed around like sofa pillows, and people loved it. They begged for more. He gave them the line from "Kiss Me Again": "There is no way a beautiful woman can live up to what she looks like for any appreciable length of time. Ting-a-ling?" People told him he was as witty as Oscar Wilde!

Understand, the biggest audience this man had had before the clambake was an artillery battery, when he was a forward spotter in Europe during World War Two.

"Ting-a-ling! If this isn't nice, what is?" he exclaimed to us all.

I called back to him from the rear of the crowd: "You've been sick, Mr. Trout, but now you're well again, and there's work to do."

My lecture agent, Janet Cosby, was there.

At ten o'clock the old, long-out-of-print science fiction writer announced it was his bedtime. There was one last thing he wanted to say to us, to his *family*. Like a magician seeking a volunteer from the audience, he asked someone to stand beside him and do what he said. I held up my hand. "Me, please, me," I said.

The crowd fell quiet as I took my place to his right.

"The Universe has expanded so enormously," he said, "with the exception of the minor glitch it put us through, that light is no longer fast enough to make any trips worth taking in even the most unreasonable lengths of time. Once the fastest thing possible, they say, light now belongs in the graveyard of history, like the Pony Express.

"I now ask this human being brave enough to stand next to me to pick two twinkling points of obsolete light in the sky above us. It doesn't matter what they are, except that they must twinkle. If they don't twinkle, they are either planets or satellites. Tonight we are not interested in planets or satellites."

I picked two points of light maybe ten feet apart. One was Polaris. I have no idea what the other one was. For all I knew, it was Puke, Trout's star the size of a BB.

"Do they twinkle?" he said.

"Yes, they do," I said.

"Promise?" he said.

"Cross my heart," I said.

"Excellent! Ting-a-ling!" he said. "Now then: Whatever heavenly bodies those two glints represent, it is certain that the Universe has become so rarefied that for light to go from one to the other would take thousands or millions of years. Ting-a-ling? But I now ask you to look precisely at one, and then precisely at the other."

"OK," I said, "I did it."

"It took a second, do you think?" he said.

"No more," I said.

"Even if you'd taken an hour," he said, "something would have passed between where those two heavenly bodies used to be, at, conservatively speaking, a million times the speed of light."

"What was it?" I said.

"Your awareness," he said. "That is a new quality in the Universe, which exists only because there are human beings. Physicists must from now on, when pondering the secrets of the cosmos, factor in not only energy and matter and time, but something very new and beautiful, which is *human awareness*."

Trout paused, ensuring with the ball of his left thumb that his upper dental plate would not slip when he said his last words to us that enchanted evening.

All was well with his teeth. This was his finale: "I have thought of a better word than *awareness*," he said. "Let us call it *soul*." He paused.

"Ting-a-ling?" he said.

"I'm sorry, guys, but I can do it faster and cheaper with Third World elves."

ROBERT DOWNEY JR. *(continued from page 76)*

I was talking shit to the people in jail and saying things like, "Heads will roll." Real pathetic stuff.

DOWNEY: I don't recall. I was trying to justify what happened up and down, saying, "It looked like my house, right?" Then my partner, Joe, laid it on me pointedly that it looked nothing like my house, that there was an elevator that went down into the house.

PLAYBOY: Have you ever gone back and said anything to the family who lived in that house?

DOWNEY: I still haven't, but I should. Hopefully by December I'll say something to the lady.

PLAYBOY: What was it like to be in the tabloid crosshairs?

DOWNEY: Thus this. [*He holds up the middle finger he displayed for paparazzi*] But in my mind, the only thing that mattered was that I had left my bags in that neighbor's house. My drugs were in those bags in that house. Get me my property.

PLAYBOY: So, actually, the media were a small concern?

DOWNEY: It was just another hurdle between me and the next hit.

PLAYBOY: Then you found yourself before an unamused judge. The same judge who had sentenced you one month earlier, when you were caught with drugs and a handgun.

DOWNEY: It's the unfortunate aspect of addictions and disease: In the face of all logic and your heart's desire to clean up is a low, distant hum in the background. I remember my lawyer saying after the first incident, "You can't make any mistakes from here on in."

PLAYBOY: But you did.

DOWNEY: I wanted to stop. I really wanted to. Stopping isn't hard. Not starting again is.

PLAYBOY: At that point, you'd become emaciated. How much did you weigh?

DOWNEY: One thirty-eight. I'll never forget it.

PLAYBOY: What are you now?

DOWNEY: One seventy. And sadly, I loved 138.

PLAYBOY: Why?

DOWNEY: I felt like a spider. I could do anything. I say sadly because there's a part of me that still, to this day, romanticizes what was going on. Not only was I at zero body fat, I was starting to get down to zero muscle mass. Then it would have been zero bone mass, and then what would have happened? A strong wind and—pixie dust.

PLAYBOY: The judge sent you to rehab after that infraction.

DOWNEY: Yes. I went to Exodus.

PLAYBOY: Where you also escaped.

DOWNEY: Exactly.

PLAYBOY: How did you get out?

DOWNEY: Like a velociraptor. Remember in *Jurassic Park* when they were systematically checking the fence for weaknesses? There were three or four off-duty police officers there, making sure I didn't go anywhere. The mistake that was made, in my estimation, was that I was woken up and given Valium and coffee, which is a low-grade speedball. Then I was alert and relaxed.

PLAYBOY: And ready to check out.

DOWNEY: Again, it's so crazy. The thought that went through my head was, I have to make this a short run. Somewhere in the back of my head, though I wasn't consciously aware of it, I knew that I had been told: "If you leave here, you are going to jail. The only place you're going from here is jail," and I said, "I don't think so." There was a sweet, dedicated, kind man who I had taken into my confidence. I asked him to get me more coffee while I took a shower. There was one window that opened, so I opened it and hurdled.

PLAYBOY: The star became a fugitive.

DOWNEY: I'm wearing my hospital pants, a Hawaiian shirt and a pair of slippers, and I went into a yacht store and first asked about some boating equipment. That must have been quite a sight. And then I asked the sales guy if he could kindly call me a taxi.

PLAYBOY: Did he know who you were?

DOWNEY: Yeah. In fact, he asked me if I wanted the taxi at the back door. And off I went. I don't—I'm not at liberty to say what happened after that. But let me put it this way: Things were about to get much more serious. Judge Mira had had enough of me, and rightly so. I thank God for him, really. He was way——

PLAYBOY: Pissed?

DOWNEY: I don't mean there was a personal vendetta or anything, but it was like, Forget it. He showed me what reality was.

PLAYBOY: He put you in jail. How was it?

DOWNEY: It wasn't until I'd been in for two days that I realized what had happened. I wasn't quite myself yet. So I was talking shit to the people in the jail and saying things like, "Heads will roll." Real pathetic stuff.

PLAYBOY: But jail made an impact?

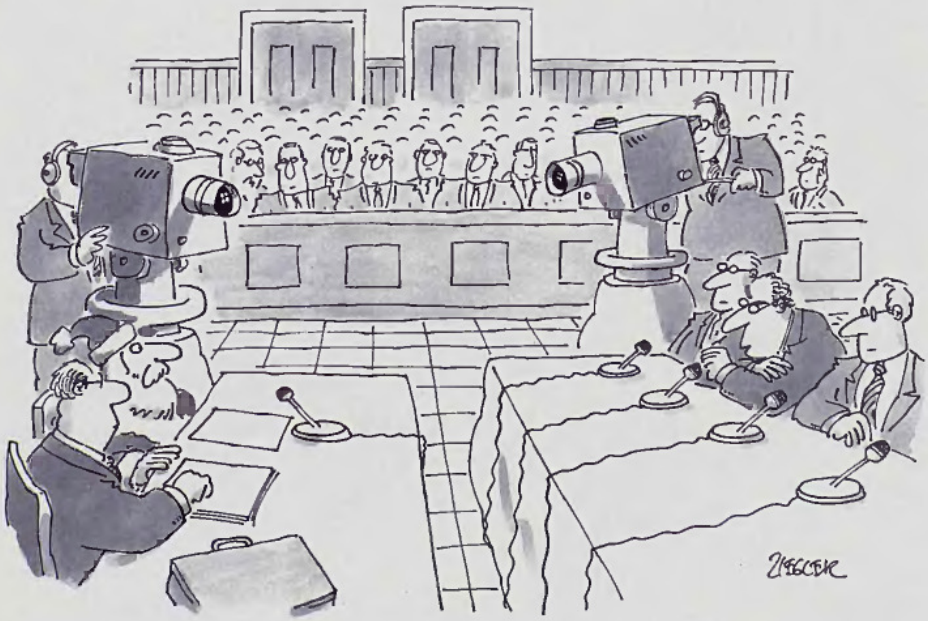
DOWNEY: Yeah, that did it. It was just horrible, being in jail. It was only for ten days, but I wouldn't wish it on anyone.

PLAYBOY: If you hadn't been forced to stop, what would have happened to you?

DOWNEY: I don't know. So many things could have happened. I could have had a real God shot. I could have hurt somebody, and then it would no longer have been a victimless-crime situation. I could have died—that was always a possibility—but I always felt that wasn't my destiny. The worst thing was that I would have continued indefinitely.

PLAYBOY: Later, you described your problem to Diane Sawyer on national TV. Why did you feel the need to publicly absolve yourself?

DOWNEY: I don't know. I just liked Diane



"It has further come to this committee's attention that the children of several key government officials have received gifts from you in the past year. Do you care to comment on that, Mr. Claus?"

Sawyer. Also it was a way to get the afternoon off from dishwashing duty at rehab.

PLAYBOY: Were you happy with what aired?

DOWNEY: It was all right, yeah. She was nice about it.

PLAYBOY: You also hosted *SNL*. A bold move, but there was criticism that you might not be taking things seriously.

DOWNEY: I don't think you can take it seriously unless you joke about it. I'm suspicious of stoicism.

PLAYBOY: You're neither stoic nor defensive about any of this stuff.

DOWNEY: I don't think you're ever reformed, and I guess there's nothing worse than a reformed smoker. I'm not that yet. So it might not be over, you know? I don't even know. I hope it is. I just don't want to come off like I feel I'm impervious.

PLAYBOY: What was your family's reaction to your problems?

DOWNEY: My mom was pretty much there for the whole thing, and I just remember her saying, "Kid, the truth is the truth." I think everybody was fairly relieved that I was in jail for a while, because it's difficult not to sober up in jail.

PLAYBOY: You have made nearly 40 movies. Are you rich? Could you not work if you chose to?

DOWNEY: No, not for long. But when I was making $40 a shift as a busboy, I had all I needed. There is something about making tons of money that makes you spend tons of money, and all of a sudden you never wash your own car, you don't make your own bed. But it's all for a price. When your phones get fucked up, you don't go down to AT&T. Some guy drives out.

PLAYBOY: You grew accustomed to the high income?

DOWNEY: Yeah, and believe me, if ever someone found the transition to boy king an easy one, it was me. No one ever sat me down and said, "Here's how you build your own little empire." I was very much left to my own devices, and as James Woods said when we were doing *True Believer*, "This kid has more silk than it took to land the troops in Normandy." I was way into clothes, way into toys. It was a fad that lasted ten years.

PLAYBOY: You spent all your money, didn't you?

DOWNEY: It's really easy to get ahead of yourself, and everything is so remarkably incremental. You make a movie, the checks come in every couple of weeks. It's not likely I would have sat down and said, "OK, let's get down to the nitty-gritty of money management." It's a good idea. I almost went bankrupt last year, but it costs 50 grand to go bankrupt nowadays.

PLAYBOY: It seems surprising you got that close.

DOWNEY: It was easy.

PLAYBOY: Because you spent so much on drugs?

DOWNEY: That was the least of it. It was extravagant purchases and no moderation. When we had Indio, we bought a house. I didn't want to be driving around in a Porsche with a baby seat, so we got a Mercedes. Then we wanted a Defender. The Defender had too short a wheelbase—I'd never bothered to test-drive it—so I traded that for a Discovery. Impulsive stuff. But it's just so bothersome to penny-pinch and sit down and go over it all. Now I am more apt to do that because, given my druthers, I wouldn't have done any films this year.

PLAYBOY: You would have taken time off?

DOWNEY: You bet. And done something else. I can't say I don't have remorse about not thinking, planning ahead. But that's just how it is now. I have no fucking regrets whatsoever.

PLAYBOY: How has all this changed you?

DOWNEY: I was changing throughout it all anyway. In some ways, I'm less motivated now than I was when I was the lovable tornado. But I'm resilient.

PLAYBOY: When John Belushi was spiraling downward, the word was that people actually gave him drugs to keep him working. Did people make it easy for you to stay on the wrong road?

DOWNEY: Nobody made it easy for me. Everybody made it more difficult, and I raced to the challenge.

PLAYBOY: Are hard drugs really prevalent in Hollywood?

DOWNEY: No. Well, it depends on who you're talking about. I think all it takes is a handful of folks messing with the brown to kick up a big dust cloud. It's so high profile.

PLAYBOY: You've said you want to direct. Do you get that from your dad?

DOWNEY: I think so. Also from watching fellows I admire and watching fellows I despise. The movie I want to direct is called *Dan's Best Friend*, about a dog walker for the rich and famous. One of the dog walkers is kind of an O.J.–meets–Keith Haring character. He takes all these dogs and sits in the park and has an out-of-body experience. The dogs run away, and he doesn't get any of them back. He's serendipitously abducted and taken to Long Island to hang out with a bunch of his old high school friends. It's a big ensemble. It's kind of dark.

PLAYBOY: When will this happen?

DOWNEY: I can probably do it next spring. In some ways the drive is to keep me doing what's convenient, which is being an actor for hire. But I have to finish the script. I've got to.

PLAYBOY: It sounds more difficult for you than acting.

DOWNEY: I think it's a lack of motivation to get down to the toughest gig in the world, which is writing. And yet I love it more than anything else—writing, painting and music.

PLAYBOY: Is acting ever hard for you?

DOWNEY: It's only hard for me when I think that the environment isn't conducive, because then I just feel hatred.

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Deep, seething rage.

PLAYBOY: Does it manifest itself, or do you keep it in?

DOWNEY: It's not appropriate to rage. Too bad.

PLAYBOY: But you always hear of actors throwing fits and tantrums.

DOWNEY: Well, I never set that precedent. To do it now would be really untimely, I think. They would say, "He must be having a rough time. He's just getting back on his feet."

PLAYBOY: Do you mean that they would not take you seriously?

DOWNEY: Why should they?

PLAYBOY: The documentary *The Last Party* was your tour through the Democratic and Republican national conventions. Did you come away loving politics?

DOWNEY: No. It was exhausting and pointless.

PLAYBOY: What about Clinton?

DOWNEY: I hear that he's actually done more than most administrations do. [*Suddenly Downey, remembering an earlier thread in the conversation, changes the subject*] But I'd have to say that aside from having had a concealed weapon, which was not loaded and which I had a permit for—and by the way, the bullets were where they were supposed to be, which is in the glove box. . . . The only reason they called it a fucking concealed weapon was that it was under the seat. But what am I supposed to do, put it in a gun rack? What's more, I'm in a truck. What am I supposed to do, put it in the flatbed in back and have it rattling around? That would be subtle. Nothing I did deserved punishment or corrective measures or anything. America is fucking ass-backward with respect to a lot of stuff.

PLAYBOY: Like what?

DOWNEY: Punishing people for drug dependency. Drug trafficking, maybe. People are dying around that. People are dying around drug dependency too, but look at Holland. It has one of the darkest histories of mankind. But they're not judgmental. I think they're perfectly aware of man's inherent desire to alter his consciousness.

PLAYBOY: You wrote and recorded the song *Smile* for *Chaplin*. Do you want to record more music?

DOWNEY: Yeah, I have enough for about two albums, 50 songs, and then a whole musical too.

PLAYBOY: Let's talk some more about your movies. Tell us what comes to mind. *One Night Stand*?

DOWNEY: Thin as a rail.

PLAYBOY: *Danger Zone*?

DOWNEY: Five hundred grand for two weeks.

PLAYBOY: *Home for the Holidays*?

DOWNEY: Loved the trailer. I mean my trailer. That was one of my favorite movies, ever.

PLAYBOY: *Restoration*?

DOWNEY: Wildly difficult and somewhat rewarding.

PLAYBOY: *Richard III*?

DOWNEY: Somewhat difficult. Ian McKellan asked me to be in it. I loved him. Fifty grand, two weeks.

PLAYBOY: *Hail Caesar*?

DOWNEY: One day, with Michael Hall. Genius scene. He was directing.

PLAYBOY: *Natural Born Killers*?

DOWNEY: Tour de force. Loved shooting in prison.

PLAYBOY: *Heart and Souls*?

DOWNEY: Real fine, San Francisco, lots of money, Deb was pregnant. Probably one of the best times in my life. Good movie.

PLAYBOY: *The Last Party*?

DOWNEY: Never need to go to another convention, thank God.

PLAYBOY: *Short Cuts*?

DOWNEY: Played my first creep. Fond memories.

PLAYBOY: *Chaplin*?

DOWNEY: Finest performance given by an actor in the 20th century.

PLAYBOY: *Too Much Sun*?

DOWNEY: Working with Dad. Always a pleasure.

PLAYBOY: *Chances Are*?

DOWNEY: Ryan O'Neal, sake festival.

PLAYBOY: *True Believer*?

DOWNEY: Learned much from James Woods.

PLAYBOY: *Less Than Zero*?

DOWNEY: Speaks for itself. Awesome.

PLAYBOY: *Back to School*?

DOWNEY: Hair hell.

PLAYBOY: *Weird Science*?

DOWNEY: Serial dumper.

PLAYBOY: Care to explain?

DOWNEY: I was the serial dumper. I defecated in a fellow castmate's trailer, much to the chagrin of Bill Paxton and Robert Rusler. It was a real bad scene. Joel Silver freaked. I never admitted it. Joel said, "Downey, did you do it?" And I said I wish I had. Because I'd been threatening everyone that if they didn't treat me right, I was going to take a dump in their trailer, or that I'd go take a shit in Joel's office on his desk or something.

PLAYBOY: Whose trailer?

DOWNEY: Kelly LeBrock's.

PLAYBOY: Was it a dump with some sort of provocation?

DOWNEY: No. It was the serial dump. Random turds.

PLAYBOY: Do you feel you have anything to prove to Hollywood or to the movie business, to restore their faith in you?

DOWNEY: That's a real dangerous assumption for me to make, you know. As far as I'm concerned, if I had stopped in 1992, I would have done all I needed to do. Now, I don't even have to prove anything to myself. I know I can do all these other things. It's not like I'd like to take up the piano or maybe take a course at NYU. I know how to do all the other things I want to do. And I've proved that to myself without having endeavored to finish or complete any of them. It's just time to step up the stakes for myself. Because otherwise I'll just wind up depressed and anxious, and I'll be in jail again shortly thereafter.

PLAYBOY: So you can't really say it's over?

DOWNEY: No. All it would take would be 45 minutes.

"This year, my wife gave me a really big Christmas surprise—she came out of the closet."

VERSACE'S PARADISE

(continued from page 94)

Kevin gets some gel from his station and begins rubbing it into the man's hair. Kevin is tall and thin, with long blond hair cut like Prince Valiant's. He was Versace's hairdresser at Oribe, on the corner of Collins and Ninth. The walls of Oribe are decorated with giant paintings of naked mermaids.

"I was called to their Bal Harbor store one evening to do Donatella's hair," says Kevin. "She liked what I did so I was summoned to their house one day to do Versace's hair. He was down-to-earth. So shy. Which made me not nervous. After that, he got me this job with Oribe."

Kevin blow-dries the man's silvery hair, fixing it just so with his fingertips. "The murder was an awful thing," he says. "I'm afraid celebrities will be fearful about coming here now. They thought it was so free before."

The silver-haired man thanks Kevin for his haircut and goes to the front desk to pay his bill. The haircut costs $75. He leaves Kevin a $10 tip. The last haircut Andrew Cunanan got in South Beach, at Supercuts, cost him $11. He didn't bother to get a shave because after he murdered Versace he let his beard grow as a disguise.

"I heard they were going to sell the house," says Antonio Martucci in his accented English. "The family can't bear to live there now and be reminded everyday of the murder." Martucci is standing behind the bar of his restaurant, Farfalla.

"I heard Mike Tyson was gonna buy it," says a man, eating linguine with clam sauce at the bar. "The furnishings and everything for $45 million."

"I heard that, too," says Martucci. "But I don't think the family will sell it to him."

Farfalla is an old-world Italian restaurant in the middle of South Beach where Versace used to order pizza and, on occasion, stop for an early dinner.

"He'd come in at 7:30 P.M.," says Martucci. "He'd sit by the window with his boyfriend. He was a quiet person, not like a typical Italian. You know how we are—we scream. His sister, now, she wore lots of gold and talked a lot."

Martucci says Versace tended to frequent mostly Italian places in South Beach ("Not gay places," he says) because they reminded him of his birthplace, Reggio Calabria. Martucci points across the street, at an ice cream store, Cocco Fresco.

"After dinner he always stopped there for a gelato because the owner was Italian. But now it's owned by Middle Easterners." He shrugs. "Versace loved it here because he wanted to re-create Italy in South Beach."

After dinner at Farfalla and a gelato at Cocco Fresco, Versace liked to walk north on Washington Avenue so he could window-shop. On rare occasions, he'd stop in the gay bar Twist for a glass of wine. Cunanan stopped in Twist, too, the day before he murdered Versace.

It's an innocuous-looking bar, no different from any other bar except that its customers are all men. A blonde woman stops in not long after the murder. One of the patrons questions her.

"Are you lost?"

The woman says, "No."

"Then you must be a tourist."

"No." She looks annoyed.

"Don't you know what kind of a bar this is?"

"Yes, I know." She finally tells him she is there because she's doing research on Versace for a magazine article.

"Oh, yes, he stopped in here once or twice. Very quiet. Then he left. I heard the family is going to sell the house. I hope someone beautiful buys it." He shrugs. "But who cares?"

•

Andrew Cunanan also frequented the late-night dance clubs Warsaw and Liquid, which he'd heard Versace frequented. But according to Versace's friends and employees, the stories that made the rounds were not true. At one time, perhaps, but not after the mysterious change in his lifestyle that happened several years ago.

"He never went to such clubs," says a servant. "He would go only as a courtesy to guests. Oh, I'm sure he had a wild side when he was younger and it served him well."

"He used to go to clubs like Warsaw in his early years in South Beach," says Tara Solomon, the *Miami Herald* columnist known as "the queen of the night." But, she adds, "not after he got sick."

A few years ago, the press reported that Versace was suffering from a form of inner-ear cancer. It was also rumored he had AIDS. When he appeared healthier, he was quoted as saying he was thrilled to have more life to live. But he was different, more sedate, quiet. Perhaps Versace had come to feel uncomfortable in the world with which he had become identified.

South Beach club behavior is "freaky, unabashedly hedonistic and decadent," says Solomon. "The scene encourages uninhibited behavior that many people believe is spiritually bankrupt." Solomon has covered the scene for several years and has strong opinions. "You know, Versace came here to get inspiration. He drew as much from the beach as we did from him. South Beach existed before he got here and he just knew a good thing when he saw it."

Tara Solomon is a short, curvaceous, 40-year-old woman with unlined, ghostly white skin. She doesn't wear clothes, she wears costumes. And she doesn't much like Versace's colorful shirts. "I mean, you can't wear Versace every day,"

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Lingerie shown on model Elina Gioni.

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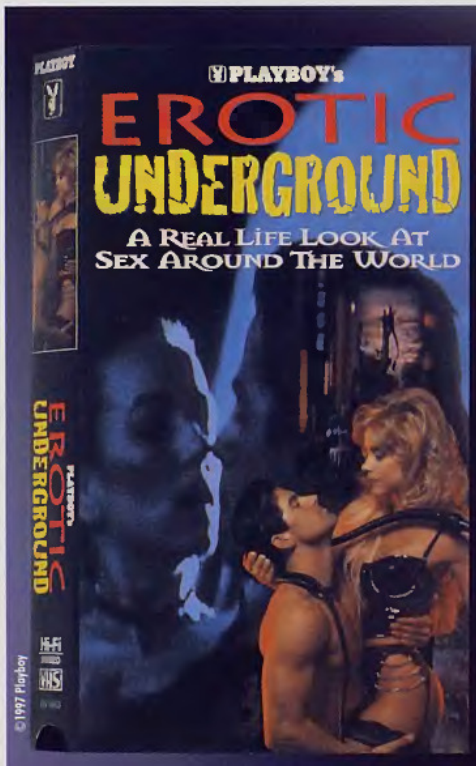

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she maintains.

Solomon, dressed like Irma la Douce, arrives at Liquid at two A.M. "They're all so dark, loud, smoky and dirty," she says. "To strangers it's just another dark club. But dark places are appealing to celebrities because they can be anonymous in them." The music is deafening. Couples, mostly women (it's "girls'" night at Liquid), are dancing in the smoky darkness. Solomon moves around the dance floor to a banquette and sits down. Around her, girls in black leather and bustiers are kissing. Tough-looking Hispanic boys walk past, staring at the girls. The crowd looks as if it was plucked en masse from a Calvin Klein ad. One guy, shirtless, is wearing his pants so low around his hips that his assiduously ruffled pubic hair is showing. There's a pornographic cartoon playing on the wall behind Solomon. "These people come to distract themselves," she says, shouting to be heard. "That's what it's all about. Distraction and denial. They think that they're invincible. They reinvent themselves every night."

Tara sees Ingrid Casares, the club owner, who is famous as the gal pal of such celebrities as Madonna and K.D. Lang and Versace. Ingrid looks like a Latin Audrey Hepburn, with closely cropped black hair and big black eyes.

Recently she hosted a party for Lang, who had to share billing with RuPaul. Lang sat in the same banquette Tara is sitting in. She complained about the music.

"I hate fucking disco," Lang said. Then, "Jesus, it's fucking cold."

When it was time for Lang to take the stage with RuPaul, Casares led her through the crowd. RuPaul was talking into the microphone. Finally RuPaul handed Lang the mike and she thanked the audience for coming and returned to her seat. A man asked her, "How does it feel to be upstaged by a no-talent drag queen?"

Lang said, "The fucking shit I got to do. Tomorrow I go to an AIDS benefit." She raised her eyebrows. "On Ivana Trump's yacht."

When Cunanan went to Liquid during his stay in Miami, he reinvented himself, too. He struck up a conversation with some drag queens, telling them he was working on a research paper for graduate school.

It's 3:30 A.M. when Solomon leaves Liquid for the short walk around the corner to the gay men's club Warsaw. The atmosphere inside Warsaw is not much different from Liquid's, except that all the clubbers are boys. The huge ballroom dance floor is packed with what Tara calls "genetically blessed and testosterone-filled boys," shirtless and muscular, dancing manically as if there will be no tomorrow. Solomon shouts above the din, "More people have a need to lose themselves than they do to find

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themselves." She walks past the stage where a lone, muscular guy, wearing only a gold lamé G-string, is gyrating and thrusting his hips at the dancers below him.

Tara goes to the upstairs bar and orders a drink. "They usually have amateur strip nights on Wednesdays," she says. "Just good clean fun." Tara prefers gay clubs to straight clubs, she says, "because I feel protected. Gay men are peacemakers. Gay clubs are also more uninhibited when it comes to sex."

One local straight bachelor says he loves to go to Warsaw with female dates because "when they see two men having sex it turns them on. They get so aroused, they're all over me."

Versace liked to go to Warsaw, too, before he "got sick." He would come with some "pretty young boys," according to Max Blandford, Warsaw's manager. Versace shunned the VIP sections and preferred to spend his time in the trenches with the wildly dancing boys.

•

It's 4:45 in the morning and there's still a line of clubbers trying to get into Liquid. The streets are crowded with young women and men, their eyes glassy, staggering down the sidewalks. In the street in front of Liquid, a policeman has handcuffed a man who is bent over the hood of his car. Across the way the 13th Street parking garage entrance is crowded with homeless men.

The 13th Street garage is where Cunanan parked the red Chevy truck he stole from William Reese, the man he killed in New Jersey. It's also where he ran to change his clothes after he murdered Versace.

At five A.M., the late-night clubbers wander down to the News Café for breakfast. The café is still playing loud dance music over its speakers. When the last of the late-nighters leaves after six o'clock, a woman with gray hair comes out with a hose and begins hosing down the tables, chairs and sidewalk. The stereo speakers switch to soft and soothing chamber music. The breakfast waiters begin to arrive.

The older, early-morning crowd begins to arrive a little later. Men in jogging shorts and flip-flops and women in spandex bra tops, shorts and sneakers sit down with their newspapers and order coffee. This is the crowd Versace was a part of when he left his mansion on the morning of July 15. He talked briefly with a waitress and began walking back toward his mansion at 8:40 A.M. He was unaware he was being followed by a disheveled, backpack-toting man wearing a white baseball cap, a white shirt and black shorts.

When Versace got to the stone steps of his mansion at 8:42 A.M., the man following him spoke to him, according to witnesses. Then the two men began to tussle. Versace tried to pull away from the man. The man pulled out a gun and shot Versace in the head. As Versace fell to the steps, the man aimed his gun at him and shot Versace a second time in the head. Then he turned and calmly walked away.

Inside, Versace's chef was preparing his breakfast (waffles and fruit). Antonio D'Amico heard the shots. He came running out the front door to find his lover dying on the steps. He screamed, "Gianni! Gianni!" Then he saw the killer walking away. He ran after him, shouting. The killer turned and leveled his gun at D'Amico. D'Amico stopped, backed off and ran back to his dying lover.

Inside the mansion, a servant was screaming into the telephone at the 911 operator, "A man's been shot!"

•

What did Cunanan say to Versace when Versace reached the steps to his house and began to open the wrought-iron gate?

Perhaps it was, "Gianni, it's me! Don't you remember?"

Versace turns to see a man who has fallen on hard times. Even if he had once met Cunanan when he had been a pampered young lover of older men, Versace probably would not have recognized him now. To Versace, this man was probably just another of those annoying people who accosted him because he was famous. "I refuse to be molested," Versace once said. "I put a DO NOT DISTURB notice on my life." So Versace turns to the man and says, "No, I'm afraid I don't know you." He turns to go through the gate.

"But we met once. You must remember. You must!"

The stranger reaches out a hand to grab Versace's arm. To make him remember. To force him to stay there until he does remember. And when he does, when Versace's face breaks into a broad smile, and he says, "Oh, of course, now I remember. How are you? Come in. Come into my life," then the stranger's life will be righted again. He will return again to that privileged, indulgent life of his recent past.

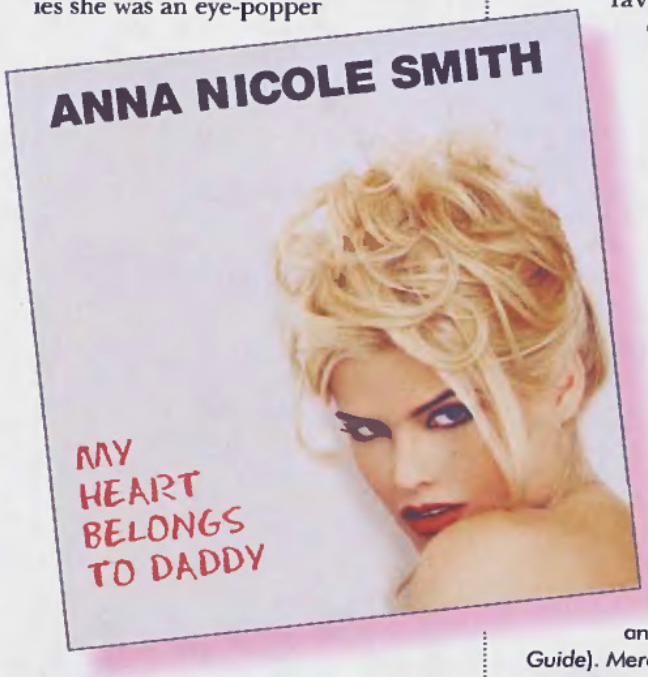
But Versace does not remember. He tries to pull his arm from the younger man's grasp. In that instant, rebuffed again by a wealthy, older gay man, Cunanan becomes infuriated. Without thinking, without having planned it, he reaches for his gun. He points it at the older man's head and pulls the trigger, as so many spurned suitors have done in the heat of rejected passion.

"Thanks a lot, Tiger!"

PLAYMATE NEWS

OOH LA LA

She is Miss May 1992, 1993's Playmate of the Year and the star of countless PLAYBOY pictorials. In movies she was an eye-popper in *To the Limit* and *Naked Gun 33⅓*. She was an advertising phenom in Guess jeans, then created a furor in Sweden with sexy underwear ads. She marketed her own fragrance called Live. And she plans to appear in PLAYBOY again in the future. Moving away from intrusive publicity about her personal life, it was only a matter of time before Anna Nicole Smith became a chanteuse. Her new CD single, *My Heart Belongs to Daddy* (BMG/France), is a club hit. Her inspiration?



Marilyn Monroe, of course. Will there be more Anna Nicole tunes? She's considering recording a CD that would feature songs she's written as well as covers of some of her favorites. So far Anna Nicole's single and the accompanying video are available only in Europe, but you can ask to order them through the import department of most large music stores. If they get enough requests, surely they will respond. Then you'll be singing *My Heart Belongs to Anna Nicole.*

Anna Nicole's European media blitz included lots of radio and club play, plus interviews and reviews in *Gala* (a *People*-style European magazine), *Cine-Tele Revue* (a Belgian weekly entertainment magazine) and *Tele 7 Jour* (the French *TV Guide*). *Merci,* Anna Nicole.

PLAYMATE BIRTHDAYS — DECEMBER

Victoria Fuller—Miss January 1996 will be 27 on December 11.
Sondra Theodore—Miss July 1977 will be 41 on December 12.
Eleanor Bradley—Miss February 1959 will be 59 on December 13.
Venice Kong—Miss September 1985 will be 36 on December 17.
Judy Tyler—Miss January 1966 will be 50 on December 24.

KIMBER WEST:
"I had wanted to be a Playmate since I was five. If you have the same fantasy, go for it."

PLAYMATES' FAMOUS HUSBANDS

Marilyn Monroe—Joe DiMaggio and Arthur Miller
Dawn Richard—David Wolper
China Lee—Mort Sahl
Dolly Read—Dick Martin
Ann Pennington—Shaun Cassidy
Patti McGuire—Jimmy Connors

Vicky McCarty

Vicki McCarty—Jimmy Iovine
Tracy Vaccaro—Fred Dryer
Karen Velez—Lee Majors
Kimberley Conrad—Hugh M. Hefner
Pamela Anderson—Tommy Lee
Deborah Driggs—Mitch Gaylord
Shauna Sand—Lorenzo Lamas
Nikki Schieler—Ian Ziering

CHICAGO AND NEW YORK PARTY HARDY AT GLAMOURCON

Five decades of Playmates traveled to bath New York and Chicago for Glamourcon 1997. Aside from signing everything under the sun, the Playmates chatted online and had their pictures taken. Joining in the fun (clackwise from left) is Miss August 1993 Jennifer Lavaie, showing same leg. Miss August 1991 and 1992 PMOY Corinna Harney and Donna Edmondson, Miss November 19B6 and 1987 PMOY, say "Cheese!" Miss June 1969 Helena Antonaccia is in the pink. Miss Navember 1982 Marlene Janssen and Barbara Edwards, Miss September 1983 and 19B4 PMOY, are picture perfect. Miss April 1993 Nicole Wood, Miss May 1993 Elke Jeinsen, Miss February 1995 Lisa Marie Scott and Miss September 1963 Victoria Valentina await their fans.

PLAYMATE NEWS

PLAYMATES IN ACTION

Fast cars, streamlined jets, sleek weapons and the talents of beautiful women playing undercover agents make director Andy Sidaris' latest straight-to-video movie, *Return to Savage Beach* (Monarch), a nonstop adventure. Miss September 1993 Carrie Westcott plays Sofia, a double agent on a treasure hunt, while May 1994 Playmate Shae Marks is cast as Tiger, a techno whiz and one of five operatives in pursuit of the horde of gold. The film, number 12 in Sidaris' body of work, uses his formula of brains, beauty and brawn. The shoot took Carrie and Shae from Louisiana to Beverly Hills to Hawaii. Thanks to our Playmates, good triumphs over evil. Look for the movie in video stores soon.

Carrie Westcott (top), Shae Marks

CAROL ZUBER MALLISON

PLAYMATE TRIVIA

Modeling fees:	1984–1989: $15,000
1959–1960: $500	1990–1997: $20,000
1961–1965: $1,000	Playmate of the Year:
1966–1967: $2,500	1960–1963: $150 plus $250 bonus
1968–1969: $3,000	1982–1997: $100,000 and an automobile
1970–1977: $5,000	
1978–1983: $10,000	

FAN MAIL

I attended Glamourcon in New York. As a working photographer from the Boston area, I enjoyed myself very much. I wasn't able to attend the first-night party, but I was curious as to how it turned out. I approached one of the Playmates the following day and asked, "Did you go to the party?" She looked a bit stunned and it was only after I repeated myself that I realized that she thought I had asked, "Did you go to the potty?" in my Boston accent. We never talked again.—Dave Ferreira, Somerville, Massachusetts

It was a big thrill to meet four of my ten "desert island Playmates" at Chicago Glamourcon. What a surprise that Playmates Terri Welles, Kym Malin, Cathy St. George and Janet Quist all remembered my letter, which appeared here in May.—Raymond Benson, raymben@aol.com

Playmates are more beautiful than most Miss Americas, and the best part is that there are more of them—12 per year. But what sets Playmates apart is their accessibility. They attend all sorts of events, from autograph signings to Glamourcon.—John Olson, olsonoslo@aol.com

SAMANTHA TORRES:
"I have traveled, met great people and developed a lot of confidence. I'll need a dose of it to succeed in California."

QUOTE UNQUOTE

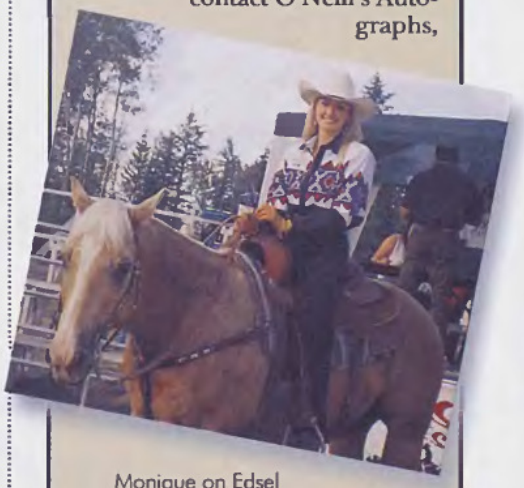
"Maybe I'm biased, but I prefer the Sixties pictorials to those of the Nineties. We didn't have any stylists or makeup artists. Mostly it was just photographer Pompeo Posar and me. It was Pompeo's idea to dress me up like a Christmas tree for the December 1968 cover. The lightbulbs got very hot. I was trying to be professional, but when I took the dress off, I was speckled from the bulbs."—CYNTHIA MYERS, Miss December 1968

"I mailed photos of myself to PLAYBOY and was called in for a test shot. I was 18 and thought it would be a great experience. The people at PLAYBOY made me feel so comfortable. My stepfather had a subscription to the magazine, which is how I first saw it. Getting chosen was like winning the sweepstakes."—CHRISTINE RICHTERS, Miss May 1986

PLAYMATE GOSSIP

Our *Playmate News* spies ran into **Jason Priestley** after Miss June 1997 **Carrie Stevens** appeared on *Beverly Hills 90210*: The cast was so impressed with Carrie that she was asked to shoot more episodes. . . . Miss November 1954 **Diane Hunter** has resurfaced. Appearing at Glamourcon this year, Diane said she had no idea her picture had been purchased by PLAYBOY until a few years after it ran. "Now, with all the interest in vintage Playmates, I'm excited," she says. . . . Look for Miss January 1955 **Bettie Page** to tell her story in PLAYBOY next year. . . . If you want a copy of Miss November 1966 **Lisa Baker's** brochure of current photos, write to her at P.O. Box 8522, Midland, Texas 79708. . . . Collectors who want autographed photos of Playmates but don't want to write to Web sites or fan clubs should contact O'Neill's Autographs, 608-221-3998. O'Neill's Web site is www.pin-ups.com. . . . **Monique Noel,** Miss May 1989, did some rough riding in Montana last summer for charity. She practiced the sport of cutting—singling out a cow from the herd—for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. . . . **Ellen Michaels,** Miss March 1972, has started a vintage toy, poster and pin-up business. Write to her at P.O. Box 1757, New York, N.Y. 10021. . . . Look for **Holly Witt,** Miss November 1995, on the cover of the current newsstand special *Playboy's Book of Lingerie*. . . . Miss October 1997 **Layla Roberts** has a part in the **Bruce Willis** movie *Armageddon*. . . . Miss February 1997 **Kimber West** makes a guest appearance on TV's *Mike Hammer*.

LEROY NEIMAN



Monique on Edsel

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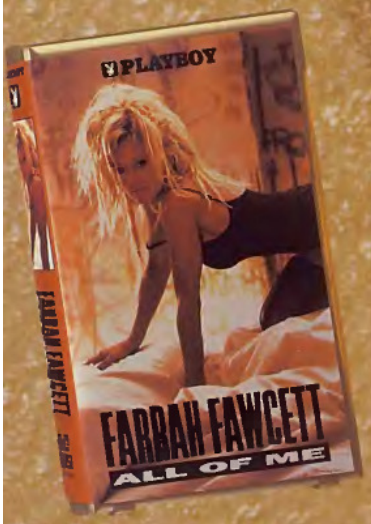

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HOME, SWEET HOME THEATER

Buying a jumbo TV is just a small step in the big-picture process of building a home theater. It's the stack of black boxes—and the speakers—that will bring your movie action to life. Start with video sources. From a software standpoint, the VCR remains the backbone of today's home entertainment system. A basic model will cost you less than $200, but for a few hundred more, you can buy one with refined head technology and noise-reduction circuits that give your picture extra punch. Other features to look for include automatic clock set (which eliminates that blinking 12:00) and commercial advance (circuitry that fast-forwards through commercials on prerecorded tapes). Want a screen image that looks as good as Uma Thurman in *Batman & Robin*? Check out the new digital video disc format. More than 200 movies are available on DVD, and first-generation players cost less than $1000. For an equally flawless picture, consider a digital broadcast satellite setup. Primestar and DSS are the top DBS alternatives. With either, be sure to request a "dual feedhorn antenna." With that you'll be able to watch the 160-plus channels of movies, music and sports on more than one TV. And don't rule out a laser disc player just yet. More than 10,000 movies are available on LD, and prices of LD hardware and software should start to drop now that DVD is a reality. You'll also need an audio/video receiver to control the sounds. Today's choices include a basic model with four-channel Dolby Pro Logic Surround sound ($200-plus) and one with 5.1-channel Dolby Digital, a home version of the crystal-clear sound used in the best movie theaters. Receivers with Dolby Digital start around $800 and come with four or five sets of inputs (perfect for a growing system). Whichever way you decide to go, make sure the machine pumps power evenly to all channels. And think balance when selecting speakers, too. An ideal set will deploy the same drivers at all five speaker locations. Called timbre matching, this practice ensures that the sonic size of *Tyrannosaurus rex* remains the same as he storms through your living room. Speaker packages with a bass-summoning subwoofer start at $400 from such companies as Bose, JBL, Technics, Sherwood and Cerwin-Vega. As with all things in life, spend more and you will get more.

Bell'Oggetti's AR-880 metal rack unit ($600) is stacked (bottom to top) with Yamaha's seven-channel RX-V2092 audio/video receiver with Dolby Digital processing ($1600); Pioneer's DVL-700 laser disc, DVD and CD player ($1000); Uniden's UDS 100 DSS receiver ($349); RCA's VR730HF hi-fi VCR with technology that skips commercials on prerecorded tapes ($700); and Sony's MDR-IF420RK wireless headphones ($170).

JAMES IMBROGNO

WHERE & HOW TO BUY ON PAGE 195.

Garden of Earthly Delights

That's SHALOM HARLOW working the runway for British designer John Galliano's winter couture collection. Demi Moore is smiling—and probably not at the evening dress.

Seasoned to Perfection

With their most recent CD, *Brand New*, and an upcoming tour, SALT-N-PEPA are having a blast. Guest appearances by Sheryl Crow and Queen Latifah spice up an album of rap and R&B. Sprinkle and serve.

The Heel Deal

Baywatch's TRACI BINGHAM has covered the beach, but not in this outfit. Aside from her steady TV gig, she has appeared on *The Young & the Restless*, *Fresh Prince of Bel Air* and *Married With Children*. We're ready for CPR.

© DAVID ALLOCCA/DMI

JIM SMEAL/GALELLA LTD.

Hollywood or Bust

Actresses MARIA CONCHITA ALONSO (above) and ELLEN BARKIN (left) each have a starring role in their dresses. Look for Alonso in *Catherine's Grove* and Barkin on video in *Mad Dog Time*. We'll give our awards to the fashions.

Hands Up

STACEY SWALL appears in *That Thing You Do*, *Glimmer Man* and *L.A. Confidential*, but you probably know her best from a network TV commercial for Tylenol. To know her better, rent her recent *Hot Body* video.

DOUGLAS STEGLITER

© SCOTT WEINER/RETNA LTD.

Pipe Dreams

The CD *Villains*, by Michigan's alternative band the VERVE PIPE, has gone platinum, and vocalist Brian Vander Ark says his next goal is to write the perfect love song, one "without clichés, without pretension." To do it, the band will have to come out—of the lockers, that is.

THE NAKED TRUTH

Looking for an excuse to play doctor? Try the Body Caliper. No, it's not a kinky sex toy, but the device, which measures your muscle-to-fat ratio, can be almost as much fun. Use the device to measure the skinfolds of the biceps, triceps, shoulder blade and pelvis. Then compare the numbers to the fitness chart that comes with the Body Caliper. (Ideal body fat percentage for men is 15, and for women, 22. Studies show this is the best way to determine one's fitness level.) If your own love handles are a little too prominent, think positive: You're in a great position to burn calories together. Price: $59, which will get you an instructional video, illustrated manual and a protective case. Call 888-881-9881.

JOHN SCHNEIDER

A WELL-HUNG SANTA

We always knew Kriss Kringle was a closet biker. Now the Cavanagh Group International, a Harley-Davidson licensee, has come out with a line of collectibles that combines Santa and cycles. Featured are teddy bears togged out in Harley gear, and Christmas tree ornaments of Santa aboard an Electra Glide. Our favorite is a black leather boot-type stocking with fur-and-metal trim that you can hang by the chimney in hopes of, say, a new timing chain or rearview mirror. Price: $50. Call 770-643-1175 for information on the nearest retailer.

DRINKER'S SMOKE

From the company that made its mark in the bourbon business comes a full-bodied cigar, the Maker's Mark Robusto. Each stogie is aromatically flavored (the bourbon never touches the tobacco) and placed in a glass tube to lock in taste. To order, call the Maker's Mark catalog at 800-680-7890. Price: $105 for ten, $243 for 25 or $133 for ten in a humidor. If you're not a puffer, MM offers bourbon-laced chocolates and a gourmet sauce, too.

ROBERT MESSYASZ

TALE OF A JAZZ CLUB

In Paris after World War Two, the place to be was Aerobleu ("the spirit of cool"), a swank jazz club where Dizzy and Miles hung out. OK, so the club is fictional. But that hasn't stopped Less Than 7, the creators of Aerobleu, from licensing a line of books (*Martini Diaries*, *Observations From the Bar*), stationery, posters, barware and more to celebrate this imaginary watering hole. Call 213-848-7012 for more info.

BUCKLE UP AT THE MALL

While your girlfriend shops till she drops at Minnesota's Mall of America, you can check out Silicon Motor Speedway, the interactive, virtual reality auto-racing center on the mall's third floor. Endorsed by top Nascar racers Dale Earnhardt and Rusty Wallace, the speedway offers 20-minute experiences in which drivers race against 29 other "cars," simulating speeds up to 200 miles per hour. Price: $7.50 for driver; $3 for crew/spotter.

THE GRAPES OF MYTH

How better to present a favorite vino from your cellar than in a bust of Bacchus, the Greek god of wine? Handcrafted by artist Eric Kaposta, the signed, limited-edition wine bucket is made of cast stone with a waterproof terra-cotta finish. It can hold a magnum bottle, in case your evening is extra festive. Price: $150. For more information or a catalog featuring other unusual Kaposta creations, call Bon Ton Inc. in Houston, Texas at 800-247-3550.

DAVE CALVER

CHOO-CHOO CHRISTMAS

When it comes to Christmas memories, the name Lionel is right up there with Rudolph and Frosty. Just ask Tom McComas, creator of the video *A Lionel Christmas*. With footage of legends in action (including the Lionel Hudson and the Santa Fe), original TV commercials, archival scenes of family life and holiday music, the 55-minute program blasts you back to the Fifties faster than you can say caboose. Price: $19.95. Call 800-892-2822 by December 18 for Christmas delivery. Other train tapes are also available.

HOLIDAY WHODUNITS

Fraud, theft and murder may not be traditional Yuletide themes, but they make great reading in *A Classic Christmas Crime*, a 189-page collection of 13 festive mystery stories by some of Britain's most intriguing writers (including P.D. James, Simon Brett and Peter Lovesey). The tome is edited by Tim Heald and distributed by Trafalgar Square Publishing. Price: $22.95. To order, call 800-423-4525.

TIME IS ABSTRACT

To announce a Parisian art exhibit in 1948, Picasso made posters adorned with *The Face*, the famous print below. Now *The Face* can be worn on your wrist. The newest addition to the Picasso Watch Collection, it has the trademark Picasso buckle and a white or yellow case (designed by PLAYBOY Art Director Tom Staebler), and it comes with a matching jewelry box (shown). Price: from $165. Call Global Trading Industries at 800-825-8228 to order.

NEXT MONTH

BOSS TWEED

GULF WAR

BUENOS AIRES

PLAYMATE REVIEW

SHANNON TWEED—IT SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY THAT THIS STATUESQUE B-MOVIE GODDESS WAS 1982'S PMOY. ALL-NEW PHOTOS IN A SPECIAL PICTORIAL TREAT

THREE BALCONIES—CHASING WOMEN WHEN YOU'RE 60 TAKES STRATEGY, AS HARRY DISCOVERS. NOBODY WRITES ABOUT GUYS LIKE **BRUCE JAY FRIEDMAN**

THE STREET HAMLET—YOU KNOW HIM AS THE BROODING DANISH PRINCE IN SHAKESPEARE'S PLAY. WAIT TILL YOU SEE HIM THROUGH THE EYES OF THE BARD FOR OUR TIMES. **SHEL SILVERSTEIN**

SEINFELD FOREVER—THE SHOW ABOUT NOTHING HAS CHANGED EVERYTHING. NOW, IN WHAT COULD BE ITS FINAL SEASON, WE SALUTE JERRY, ELAINE, GEORGE, KRAMER AND THE REST

BETTIE PAGE, THE REAL STORY—WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE QUEEN OF PIN-UPS? FOR THE FIRST TIME, SHE REVEALS THE TRUTH ABOUT THE DARK CHAPTERS OF HER LIFE—AND TELLS SOME FUNNY STORIES. AN EXCLUSIVE CONVERSATION WITH **KEVIN COOK**

THE YEAR IN SEX—FRANK GETS BUSTED, JFK JR. GETS BUFFED AND FARRAH GIVES GOOD BRUSH. OUR ANNUAL FEATURE GETS BETTER EVERY TIME!

THE BATTLE OF KHAFJI—FIGHTING THE GULF WAR WAS NO WAY FOR ANYONE TO SPEND THE HOLIDAYS—FICTION BY **TOM PAINE**

VIOLENCE IN RAP MUSIC—FROM VULGAR LYRICS TO THE DEATHS OF TUPAC SHAKUR AND NOTORIOUS B.I.G., RAP IS HAUNTED BY BAD BLOOD AND WORSE RUMOR. DOES IT HAVE A FUTURE? **ALEC FOEGE** INVESTIGATES

PLUS: A BREAKAWAY INTERVIEW WITH **GRANT HILL,** THE SMASHINGEST NEW YEAR'S PARTY YOU COULD IMAGINE, FICTION BY **STEPHEN BAXTER** AND **ARTHUR C. CLARKE,** BUENOS AIRES (THE NIGHTLIFE CAPITAL OF SOUTH AMERICA), **PLAYMATE REVIEW** AND A SURPRISE PICTORIAL

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